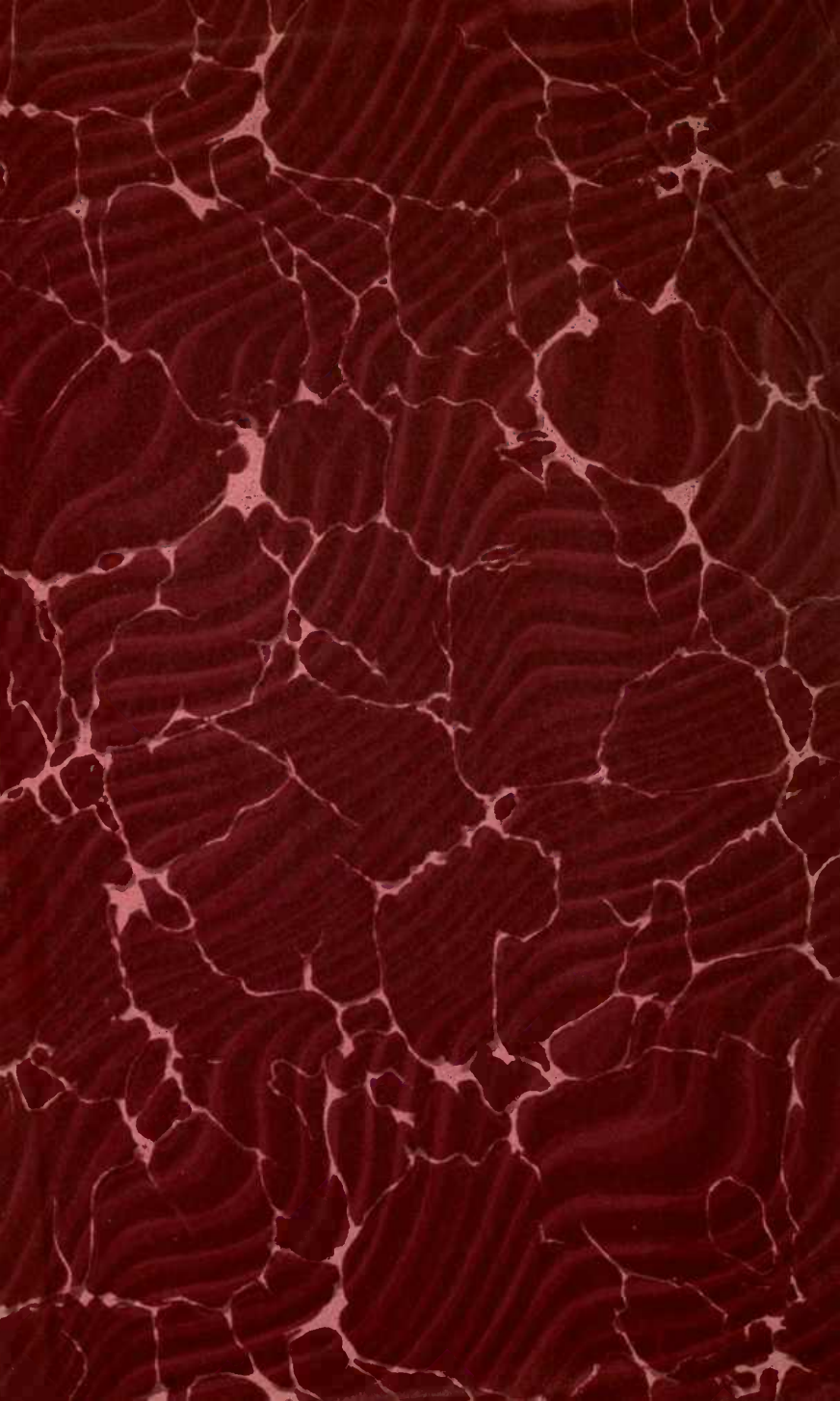
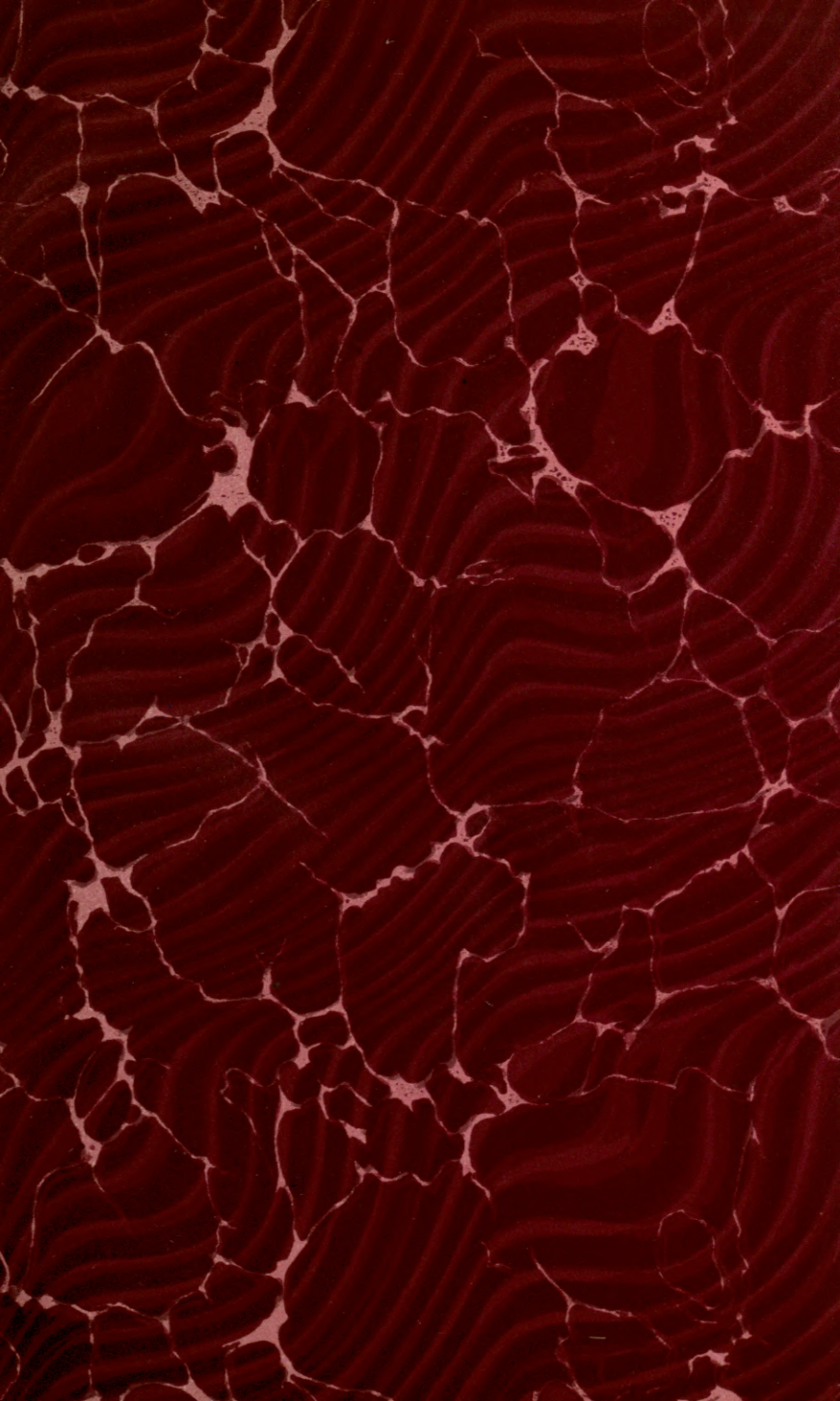


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**The
Italian Novelists**

Volume Five

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Vol

THE
ITALIAN
NOVELISTS

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH BY

W. G. WATERS

CHOICELY ILLUSTRATED BY
E. R. HUGHES, A.R.W.S., LONDON

IN SEVEN VOLUMES
VOLUME V.

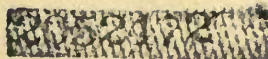
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THE
PECORONE
OF
SERGIOVANNI

FOR FIRST TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH BY

W. C. WATERS

The Lady of Belmonte Welcomes
Giannetto

ILLUSTRATED BY

R. S. LONDON

FIRST NOVEL

IN THREE VOLUMES
VOLUME I

LONDON PRIVATELY PRINTED
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The Lady of Belmont Welcomes
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The Fourth Day
FIRST NOVEL

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OF
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E. R. HUGHES, A.R.W.S., LONDON

IN THREE VOLUMES
VOLUME I

LONDON PRIVATELY PRINTED
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Salutation.

Thirteen hundred and sebenty-eight the year
When I, one Ser Giovanni, wrote this book,
As all may see who list therein to look,
Wrote it, and set in order, neat and clear.

To gibe a name thereto I took small care,
Since a good friend of mine its ttle found,
The Pecorone, for that it doth abound,
With owlsh loons, who make within their lair.

A loon myself, I ober these preside,
And like a bleating calf my way pursue,
Book-making, and I know not what beside,
Granted the times be ripe, and that my due
Of fame and honour with me may abide,
For praise will greet me from the loutish crew.

Then marvel not, O reader, if you find
The book and writer of the self-same kind.



Proem.



IN order to let fall some sparkling ray of refreshing light and consolation upon him who may be in that mood, which in times gone by has weighed on me, I am moved by charitable and loving zeal to make beginning of this book of mine, in which we will treat of a young man, Brother Aurette, and a maid, Sister Saturnina, who — as you will understand in reading this narrative — were most fervently enamoured one of another. And for the reason that they knew so well how to keep secret their meetings, and to bear the yoke of bright-eyed love, they have supplied me with matter wherewith to build up the book which follows, especially when I came

to hear of their graceful inventions, their seemly bearing, and of the amorous conversation they held with one another in order to mitigate the burning flame of love which consumed them. Wherefore, finding myself at Dovadola, with my fortunes blasted, and hunted by ill luck, as you will be able to understand while you read this book, and having at hand material and invention sufficient to let me tell my story, I began this work in the year of Christ MCCCCLXXVIII., the year when, by Divine grace, Urban VI., my fellow-countryman, was elected to the supreme pontificate, the most serene Charles IV. being, by the grace of God, King of Bohemia and Emperor of the Romans.

In the city of Forli, in Romagna, there was a certain monastery where dwelt a prioress and several sisters, all women of holy, upright, and perfect lives, and amongst them was Sister Saturnina, who was in the flower of her youth, and as well-mannered, prudent,

and fair to look upon as nature could have made her. Moreover, on account of her honest and heavenly way of life, the prioress and the other sisters held her in the highest affection and reverence. The fame of her loveliness and virtue shone abroad through the whole country, so richly had she been dowered by nature; and on this account a young man of Florence, named Aurretto, a prudent, clever, and well-mannered youth, one well versed in the ways of the world, and one who had spent the greater part of his possessions in his liberal courtesies, became enamoured forthwith of the lovely Saturnina through the fame of her beauty, without having ever looked upon her face. Wherefore he determined to enter the brotherhood, and to betake himself to Forli, and to offer himself as chaplain to the prioress, so that he might have conveniency to see Saturnina, so ardently did he burn with love of her. Having settled to do this thing, he put in order all his affairs, and became a friar, and

went to Forli. There he contrived, by enlisting with much skill the assistance of some personage of weight, to become chaplain to the monastery. He bore himself with so much prudence and wisdom that, in a short time, he gained the goodwill of the prioress and of all the other sisters, but chiefly he won the favour of Saturnina, whom he loved more than his life.

Now it happened that while the said Brother Aurette gazed in honest love at Sister Saturnina, and she at him, Love, whose lesson is soon learnt by gentle hearts, bound these two together in such wise that at first they would greet each other from a distance with smiles. Then, following the course of love, they frequently took one another by the hand, and spake together, and wrote numerous letters, their love waxing so rapidly that they planned to meet each other at a certain hour in the convent parlour, a place which was secluded and little frequented. When they had once met and

held converse there, they settled to come thither once every day, so that they might talk there at their ease. And they made a rule that each one should tell a new story every day for recreation and delight, which thing was duly brought to pass."

The First Day.



The first Day.

NOVEL I.

Galgano is enamoured of Madonna Minoccia, wife of Messer Stricca. She is not minded to listen to him; but, having heard her husband speak great praise of Galgano, she resolves to be cruel to him no longer. The story of the virtuous resolution taken by Galgano, at the moment when he was about to enjoy her.



WHEN the two lovers aforesaid had duly planned how they might meet for converse, as it has already been recorded, and when the appointed hour had come, they found themselves face to face, and sat down together with the utmost joy and delight. Then Frate Aurette began to speak in this wise, "My

Saturnina, I am fain to tell you a story of something which came to pass in the city of Siena, concerning a certain lady and a gentleman who was enamoured of her.

In Siena there lived a youth named Galgano, wealthy, nobly born, sprightly, and well skilled in all fitting exercises, valiant, brave, high-minded and ever courteously disposed towards people of all sorts. Now this Galgano fell in love with a lady of Siena whose name was Madonna Minoccia, the wife of a certain Messer Stricca, and on this account he was wont always to go clad in his lady's colours, and to carry her device, arming himself, and jousting, and giving rich banquets for love of her ; but for all this Madonna Minoccia would not listen to him, and Galgano was brought to such a pass that he knew not what to say or do, seeing how cruel was the humour which ruled the heart of this lady, whose welfare he held dearer than his own. He sought her at every merrymaking and

wedding in the city, and he was ill pleased with any day which might pass without letting him behold her. Many a time he sent to her messages and gifts, but she took no heed of these, and became more and more cruel every time he addressed her.

Thus the lover remained some time inflamed with the love and devotion he had for her, and often he would cry out in passionate torments, and say, 'Ah, Love my Lord, canst thou let me love in this wise without winning aught in return? Canst thou not see that this is contrary to all thy laws?' And thus many and many a time, as he considered how great was the cruelty of the lady, he was fain to despair. But like a discreet wooer he resolved to submit to this yoke as long as Love should will, always hoping the while to find grace in his lady's sight, and striving, both by word and deed, to let ensue all such things as might best please her, but she remained quite inflexible. Now one day

it happened that Messer Stricca and his fair lady were at their country house near to Siena, when by chance Galgano went by with a sparrowhawk upon his fist, making believe to be going fowling. But he was in sooth bent on naught else than to get sight of the lady, wherefore he passed close by the house where she abode. Messer Stricca beheld him, and straightway knew who he was, and, having gone to meet him, grasped him by the hand in familiar wise, and begged him to be pleased to take his supper with Madonna Minoccia and himself. But Galgano after thanking him said, 'I am exceedingly grateful, but I must beg you to hold me excused, forasmuch as I am going to a certain place on business of of great weight.' Then said Stricca, 'Take at least a draught with us,' whereto the young man replied, 'I thank you much, and God be with you, but I am in haste.' Then Messer Stricca, seeing what mood he was in, let him pass on and went back into the house.

Galgano, as soon as he had parted from Messer Stricca, said to himself, 'Ah, woe is me! why did I not do his bidding? then at least I should have seen her who has my good will beyond any other in all the world.' And while he thus pondered, a magpie rose near him, whereupon he let go his hawk, which pursued the pie into Messer Stricca's garden, and there seized it. Messer Stricca and his wife, when they beheld the hawk, ran to the window, and the lady, remarking the fierceness with which the hawk attacked the pie, asked her husband to whom it belonged. Messer Stricca answered, 'This hawk is fortunate in resembling its owner, for he is the most valiant young gentleman in all Siena, and the most accomplished.' The lady asked what his name might be, and her husband answered, 'This hawk belongs to Galgano, who went by lately. I was fain he should stop and sup with us, but he would not. He is in sooth the most gracious and worthy

young man I have ever seen.' Then they went to their supper, and Galgano, having lured back his hawk, departed. The lady meantime took note of all that had been said, and kept it in mind.

It happened that a few days later Messer Stricca was sent by the commune of Siena on a mission to Perugia, and left his lady alone. She, as soon as her husband had ridden off, sent a maid who was in her confidence to Galgano, with a message begging him to come to her, forasmuch as she was fain to have speech with him; and, as soon as the message was delivered, Galgano replied that he would assuredly do her bidding. He, knowing that Messer Stricca had gone to Perugia, set forth at a befitting hour in the evening towards the dwelling of her whom he loved as he loved his own eyes. When he was come into the lady's presence, he greeted her with deep reverence; whereupon she took him by the hand in sportive guise, and embraced him, saying, 'In sooth, my Galgano is

a hundred times welcome, and without farther discourse they gave one another loving greeting, over and over again. Then the lady bade them bring wine and sweetmeats; and, after they had partaken of the same in company, she took him by the hand and said, 'My Galgano, it is time to go to rest, wherefore let us go to bed.' To this Galgano answered and said, 'Madonna, I am altogether at your service.' And when they had entered the bedchamber, after much and delightful conversation, the lady undressed herself and got into bed, and said to Galgano, 'It seems to me that you are somewhat abashed and fearful. What is the reason of this? am I not to your liking? are you displeased with aught? have you not got all you desire?' Galgano answered, 'Ah yes, madonna. Indeed, God could give me no greater boon than to let me find myself in your arms.' And as they went on talking over this happy event, he undressed himself, and got into the

bed beside her for whom he had longed so ardently these many months.

Now, as he lay down beside her, he said, 'Madonna, there is one favour I have to beg of you, with your good pleasure.' The lady made answer, 'Ask what you will, my Galgano, but I would that you should first embrace me;' and this Galgano did, and went on to say, 'Madonna, I wonder greatly what led you to send for me this evening, rather than at any other time during all the months I have desired and followed you, you meantime having denied me both words and glances. What has moved you at last?' The lady said, 'I will tell you. You know that a few days ago you passed hereby with your hawk, and when my husband saw you he was fain that you should sup with us, but you refused. Then your hawk flew at a magpie, and I, seeing how bravely it clutched its quarry, asked my husband as to whom it belonged. He replied that its owner was the most

worthy gentleman in Siena, and that his hawk was well matched with him ; saying likewise that he had never beheld any-one so accomplished as you are. He praised you to me so highly that I, hearing you lauded thus, and knowing what kind feeling you had towards me, determined to send for you, and to be no longer cruel to you. This is the reason for what I have done.' Galgano inquired if this were really the truth, and the lady replied that it was. ' But was there no other reason ? ' he said ; whereto she answered that there was indeed no other. Then said Galgano, ' It cannot be God's pleasure or will that, after your husband has used so great courtesy to me, I should put such disgrace upon him.' Whereupon he sprang out of bed at once, and, having dressed himself, bade farewell to the lady and went his way, nor did he ever again cast eyes upon her with such intent, and always bore himself towards Messer Stricca with peculiar love and reverence."

NOVEL II.

Bucciolo and Pietro go to study at Bologna. Bucciolo, having been licensed to practise the law, resolves to return to Rome without his friend, but afterwards settles to wait for him. Meantime he asks the master who has taught him what is the right way to make love. The good fortune which befell him thereanent, and the evil case of the master.



WHEN the novel was finished Saturnina began and said, "This tale indeed pleased me greatly when I learned the constancy of this gentleman at the moment when he held in his arms her whom he had desired for so long a time. If I had been in his place, I know not what I should have done. And now I will tell you a story which I believe you will find diverting," and she began in these words :

"In the family of the Savelli at Rome there were at a certain time two young

men who were close friends and companions, one of whom was called Bucciolo and the other Pietro Paolo. They were well-born and plentifully supplied with the world's goods, and it chanced that they were both of them seized with the desire to go and study at Bologna, the one intending to study civil and the other statutory law. Wherefore, having bidden their kinsfolk farewell, they took their way to Bologna; and, when they arrived there, they set themselves to study the laws as they had settled, and kept diligently at their learning for some time. Now it must be well known to you that the statute law is far less in volume than the other branch, and on this account Bucciolo, who had engaged himself with the first named, mastered his work much more rapidly than did Pietro Paolo, and, as soon as he had graduated, he made up his mind to go back to Rome. One day he said to Pietro Paolo, 'Comrade, since I have now graduated I have resolved to return home.' Whereupon

Pietro Paolo answered him and said, 'I beg you that you will not leave me here alone, but that you make it your pleasure to tarry with me here during the winter, and when the spring shall have come we will return home together. You might occupy yourself meanwhile by studying some new science, so as not to waste your time.'

Bucciolo was content to follow his friend's suggestion, and promised to wait for him, and it came to pass that to avoid loss of time he went to his master and said, 'I have made up my mind to await here until my friend and kinsman shall be ready to depart ; wherefore I beg you that you will vouchsafe to teach me meanwhile some seemly science or other.' To him the master replied that he would do this with pleasure, and added, 'And now you must make choice of whatever science you wish to learn, and I will willingly teach you the same.' Then said Bucciolo, 'My master, I would fain learn how to make love, and how to set about

such work.' The master could scarce keep from laughing as he listened, and said, 'In sooth your choice pleases me well, for you could not possibly have fixed upon any other science which would have given me so much delight. Now on Sunday morning I would have you go to the church of the Friars Minor, where you will be sure to find all the ladies of the city gathered together, and then consider well in your mind whether you may not espy there some one or other who pleases your fancy. When you have found such an one, follow her up, and do not lose sight of her till you shall have discovered where she lives. Then come back to me. This is the first part of the science that I would have you learn.'

Whereupon Bucciolo went his way, and on the following Sunday morning he betook himself, as his master had directed him, to the church of the Friars; and, having cast his eyes round upon the assembled ladies, of whom there

were a great number, he espied amongst them one who pleased him mightily, forasmuch as she was exceedingly fair and graceful. When the women went out of the church, Bucciolo followed after this lady, and saw and noted the house where she lived. She, when she observed his doings, was well advised that this scholar was beginning to be enamoured of her. Then Bucciolo went back to the master and said, 'I have not failed to do the thing you directed me to do, and indeed I have seen a lady who pleases my taste exactly.' When he heard this the master was hugely delighted, and fell to bantering Bucciolo somewhat with regard to the particular science he was so full of desire to learn, and spake to him thus: 'Now see that you fail not to pass by her house twice or thrice every day with modest and seemly carriage, and be sure to keep your eyes well within bounds, and do not let it appear as if you were looking at her; but take as much pleasure as you can

from the sight of her, so that she, observing this, may be fully assured that you are her well-wisher. When you have done this, come back to me, for this is the second part of your lesson.'

Bucciolo went at once from the master's presence and forthwith began to walk up and down in front of the lady's house in discreet fashion, so that she doubted not that he had come thither for her sake. On this account, after a short time had passed, she would cast now and then a glance at him; whereupon Bucciolo gave her a modest salute, a courtesy which she returned again and again. Thus Bucciolo deemed that the lady was indeed enamoured of him. He took an account of all that had passed back to the master, who answered and said to him, 'What you have done pleases me much, and I am quite contented. You have learned your lesson well up to this point, but now it will be necessary for you to find some means of getting one or other of those women

who are wont to go about Bologna selling veils and satchels and such things, to speak to her, and then you must send word to the lady, and tell her that you are her servant, and that there is no one in all the world who possesses your goodwill so completely as she does, and that you are ready to do anything to give her pleasure which she may demand. Then you will see whether she may have aught to say to you, and whatever her answer may be, you must come and give me information thereof, and according to its terms I will let you know what it behoves you to do next.'

Bucciolo took his leave, and managed to find a pedlar-woman who was well fitted to discharge an office of this sort, and said to her, 'I desire greatly that you should do me a most pressing service, one for which I will pay you liberally, so that you shall be well satisfied.' The woman made answer, 'I will do for you whatever you may ask of me, for I come here for no other reason than

to earn an honest penny.' Thereupon Bucciolo gave her two florins, and said to her, 'I wish you to go this day into a street which is called La Mascarella, where there lives a young gentlewoman whose name is Madonna Giovanna, a lady whom I love more than any other in the world. I want you to commend me to her, and furthermore to tell her that I am ready to do anything that may be her pleasure. Be sure to tell her all this in those soft words which you assuredly know so well how to use.' Then said the old woman, 'Leave all this business to me, and I will find a fitting time for the discharge thereof.' Bucciolo replied, 'Go about it at once, and I will await you here.'

The pedlar-woman straightway departed, taking with her a basket of her wares; and, having gone to the house of the lady aforesaid, she found her seated in her doorway. After she had given the lady salutation, she said, 'Madonna, is there amongst these wares of

mine anything which it would please you to possess? Should there be any, take it without hesitation, if so be it will give you pleasure.' And with these words she sat down by the lady's side and began to show her the veils, and the satchels, and the ribbons, and the mirrors, and all the other things she had to sell. When she had looked at many of the old woman's wares, she came upon a satchel there which pleased her greatly; whereupon she said, 'In sooth, if I had money therefor, I would willingly buy from you this satchel.' The woman said, 'Madonna, there is no need for you to trouble yourself on that score. If there should be anything here which pleases you, take it at once, for all these wares are paid for already.' The lady was mightily astonished when she heard these words, and at seeing how great were the blandishments which the old woman used upon her, so she said, 'My good woman, what do you mean by speaking such words as these to me?'

Whereupon the pedlar-woman, almost ready to shed tears, said, ‘ I will tell you all about the matter. The truth is, that there is a young gentleman whose name is Bucciolo, and he it is who has sent me to you. He loves you well, and nourishes for you greater kindness than for anyone else in the world ; nay, there is not anything lying within his powers which he would not do for your sake. He protested to me indeed that God could show him no greater favour than to make you command him to do some service on your behalf. In truth, it seems to me that he is wasting away, so great is his desire to have speech with you, and, besides this, I do not think that I ever saw a more worthy and upright youth than he is.’ The lady, when she heard these words, blushed the colour of scarlet, and, turning to the pedlar-woman, spake thus, ‘ If it were not that I feel obliged to spare you for the sake of my honour, I would handle you in a fashion that would make you

lament the day you ventured to address me in such wise. How, indeed! are you not ashamed, profligate old wretch as you are, to come with such discourse to an honest woman? May God vex you therefor!’ And with these words the young lady caught up the crossbar of the door, in the mind to lay it over the old woman’s back, crying out the while, ‘If you ever dare to come back here, I will belabour you in such fashion that you will never be able to show yourself again.’

Upon this the old woman gathered together her wares with all possible speed and hurried away as fast as she could go, for she was in great dread lest she should be made to feel the weight of that crossbar, and she felt herself in no way safe until she had returned to the place where she had left Bucciolo. As soon as Bucciolo saw her he asked her what news she had to tell him, and how the affair was progressing; whereupon she answered and said, ‘It is going on very

badly, for indeed I never felt so great fear in all my life, and the upshot of the matter is that the young woman will neither see you nor listen to your messages. And if I had not chanced to get me quickly out of her reach, I should surely have been made to taste the quality of a heavy crossbar which she had in her hand. As far as I am concerned, I am in no mind to go back to her, and I will advise you also to entangle yourself no farther with her.' Bucciolo was greatly perturbed and grieved at what the old woman had to tell him, and went straightway to the master, and let him know all that had come to pass.

But the master gave him encouragement and said, 'Do not despair, Bucciolo, for the tree does not fall at the first stroke. But be sure that you fail not to pass by her house this evening, and then you can note what sort of glance she gives you, and see whether she appears angered with you or not. Then come back here to me and report what you

have seen.' Thereupon Bucciolo betook himself towards the house where his lady dwelt, and she, as soon as she beheld him approaching, called to one of her maids and said to her, 'Follow that young man and tell him from me that he is to come to my house to-night and speak to me, and on no account to fail.' The maid set out forthwith, and went to Messer Bucciolo and said to him, 'Messere, Madonna Giovanna has bidden me to ask you to come to her to-night, as she wishes to speak to you.' Bucciolo was much astonished when he heard this, and answered her saying, 'Take word back to her from me and tell her that I will gladly do her bidding.' And he went straightway to the master to let him know how the business was going on.

The master was greatly astonished at what he heard from Bucciolo, and now indeed he began to suspect that this lady might perchance prove to be his own wife, as indeed she really was.

Wherefore he said to Bucciolo, 'Well, and will you go to her as she asks?' and the young man answered that he would assuredly go to meet the lady. Then the master went on and said, 'When you go on your errand, see that you pass by here on your way,' and Bucciolo assured him that he would not fail to do this, and departed. Now, as it has already been noted, this young woman was the master's wife, but of this Bucciolo had no knowledge. Moreover, the master had more than once been seized with jealousy on her account; for during the winter it was his wont to sleep at the schools, in order that he might give instruction to the scholars during the evening, while his wife was left alone in the house with the maid.

Now the master said to himself, 'It is not at all to my taste that this youth should become proficient in the science of love-making at my cost; therefore I must find out how the matter stands.' When Bucciolo came to him in the

evening, and told him that he was now on the way to his appointment, the master said to him, 'Good, and be sure that you bear yourself discreetly.' Bucciollo answered that the master might well leave this to him, and took his departure.

Bucciollo had been careful to put a stout cuirass upon his back, and to take with him likewise a good knife and a sword of proof, so he did not enter upon this adventure like a fool. After a few minutes had passed the master followed upon the track of his pupil, who, all unwitting that he was being thus dogged, went up to the door of the lady's house and knocked thereat. She at once opened it to him, and he went in. When the master saw that it was indeed his wife who was engaged in this business, he almost swooned, and cried out, 'Now I see that this fellow has learnt his lesson at my expense.' Then he began to cast about in his mind how he might take his vengeance

by killing Bucciolo ; and, having hastily gone back to the schools, he borrowed a sword and a dagger, and then returned, raging with anger, to his house with the intention of working some injury to Bucciolo. When he had come to the door he began to knock at it like one in great haste, and the lady, who was seated at the fireside with her lover, was at once seized with the fear that this must be the master ; wherefore she took Bucciolo and concealed him straightway under a heap of linen, recently washed and not yet dry, which she had piled up on a table under the window. Having done this, she went to the door and demanded who was there ; whereupon the master called out, ‘ Open the door and I will soon let you know, wicked woman that you are.’ Whereupon his wife opened the door to him at once ; and, marking that he had a sword in his hand, cried out, ‘ Alas ! my lord, what is the meaning of this ? ’ The master said, ‘ You know well enough what man it is you

have in the house.' His wife replied, 'Woe is me! What is this you are saying? Are you out of your mind? Search everywhere for what you are seeking, and if you find any man here, cut me in pieces. Why should I begin now-a-days to do what I have never thought of doing hitherto? Take care, my good sir, lest the great enemy should make you see certain things which may cause you to lose your wits.' In spite of these words the master made them kindle for him a torch, and then he began to hunt about amongst the casks in the cellar. After this he went upstairs again and searched every corner of the bedchamber, and looked under the bed, thrusting his sword through the straw mattress and piercing it with holes in every part. In short, he searched every hole and corner of the house without having the wit to find what he was seeking.

In the meantime his wife always kept close to his side with the torch in her hand, crying out from time to time,

A Lesson in Love

The First Day

SECOND NOVEL

A Lesson in Love

The First Day

SECOND NOVEL



‘Good master, see that you cross yourself, for of a surety the enemy of mankind must be tempting you, and stirring up your imagination to perceive certain things which could not possibly have any existence; for, if there was a single hair on my body which thought to do the things you speak of, I would kill myself outright. Therefore, I pray you, for God’s sake, not to suffer yourself to be thus tempted.’ On this account the master, when he saw that there was no one in the house, and listened to what his wife had to say, was fain to believe that he had been deceived. Then, after tarrying a short time longer, he put out the torch and went back to the schools. As soon as he was out of the way Madonna Giovanna locked the door, and made Bucciolo come forth from under the heap of linen. After they had kindled a big fire they made a good supper off a fine fat capon, and drank therewith wine of various sorts, and thus they feasted most excellently well. Many

times the lady said to the youth, 'See now, my husband has no notion of what we are doing.' And after they had feasted with much jollity to their hearts' content, the lady took Bucciolo by the hand, and led him into the bedchamber, where with merry sporting they went to bed together, and all through that night they took their fill of that pleasure which they both desired, giving one another the greatest delight over and over again.

When the night, for which they had longed so ardently, came to an end, the day broke, and Bucciolo having got up from the bed, said to the lady, 'Madonna, I must needs now take my leave; have you any commands to lay upon me?' Then the lady replied, 'Yes, I desire that you should come to me again to-night.' Bucciolo assured her that he would not fail her in this, and when he had taken leave of her he left the house and made his way back to the schools, and said to the master, 'I have somewhat to tell you which will make you

laugh.' The master demanded to know what this might be; whereupon Bucciolo said to him, 'Last night, when I was in the house of the lady I told you of, lo and behold! her husband came all unexpectedly and searched the house from top to bottom, but he could not find me, forasmuch as his wife had hidden me away beneath a pile of linen which had been washed and was not yet dry. And to make a short story of it, the lady knew so well how to cajole her husband that she induced him to go away. After this we took our supper off a fat capon, and drank the most delicate wines, and altogether spent the night in the greatest feasting and jollity you ever heard of, and thus we took our diversion till the day broke. And because I slept scarcely at all last night, I must now go and take a little rest, seeing that I have given her my promise to go back to her this evening.' The master said to him, 'See that you let me know when you are about to return to

her.' Bucciolo said that he would willingly do this, and went away, leaving the master so greatly inflamed with rage that he could find no rest for his grief, and was quite unable to do his teaching in the schools, so sharply was his heart vexed with indignation; but, having made a plan how he might catch Bucciolo when evening should have come, he provided himself with a cuirass and a helmet for the adventure.

When it was drawing towards evening Bucciolo, who knew naught of these preparations, went innocently to the master, and said to him, 'I am now going to the lady's house.' The master answered him, 'Go, and come back here to-morrow morning, and let me know how you have fared.' Bucciolo said that he would not fail to do this, and then went forthwith to the house of Madonna Giovanna. As soon as he was gone the master caught up his arms and followed close behind him, almost step for step, having planned to come

up with him on the threshold. But the lady, who was on the alert, opened the door very quickly, and, having let in her lover, she closed it again and turned the key. The master followed the next moment, and began to knock and make a great uproar; whereupon the lady immediately put out the light and made Bucciolo get behind her as she stood in the passage. Then she opened the door, and, embracing the master with one arm, with the other she thrust Bucciolo forth from the house in such wise that her husband caught not a glimpse of him. Then she began to scream aloud, 'Help, help! for the master has gone mad,' holding him tight in her arms meanwhile. The neighbours, when they heard the noise and uproar she made, ran together to the house, and, seeing the master there fully armed, and hearing the outcry of the lady, who went on exclaiming, 'Hold him tight, for he has lost his wits through too much study,' they understood what was the matter,

and believed that he was, indeed, out of his mind, and began to say to him, 'Now, good master, what is the meaning of this? Go to bed and rest, and do not struggle any more.' Whereupon the master cried out, 'How should I go to bed and rest myself when I know that this wicked woman has a man in the house? I myself saw him enter?' Madonna Giovanna, when she heard this, cried out, 'Ah, what a wretched life I have to lead! Ask every one of our neighbours here whether anybody has ever heard of misconduct of mine.' Then all the men and women there assembled exclaimed, 'Master, you must not harbour such thoughts, for there was never born into the world a woman of better nature, or manners, or reputation, than your good wife here.' The master said, 'How can this be, when I myself saw a man enter the house, and know quite well that he is still hiding there?'

In the meantime the two brothers of

the lady had joined the gathering ; and she, when she saw them, burst into tears immediately and said, ‘ My brothers, this husband of mine has gone mad, and has dared to say that I have a man concealed in this house. Moreover, he is fain to kill me. Now you will know well enough whether I have ever been the sort of woman of whom such slanderous words might be spoken.’ The brothers cried out, ‘ We are indeed amazed that you should call our sister a lewd woman. Why should you hold her to be one now, more than heretofore, seeing that you have lived a long time with her ? ’ The master replied, ‘ I can tell you naught else than that there is a man in the house, and that I have seen him with my own eyes.’ Then said the brothers, ‘ Well, come and let us search for him, and if he is indeed here we will advance this fact against her, and cause her to be punished to your full satisfaction.’ Then one of the brothers called to his sister and said,

‘Tell me all the truth. Have you any-one hidden here in the house?’ whereto the lady answered, ‘Alas! what are you saying? Christ defend me from this, and let me die sooner than that a single hair of me should think of doing such wickedness. Alas, alas! is it likely that I should now set myself to do a thing of which no one of our family was ever accused? Are you not ashamed even to speak to me thereof?’

The brothers were well content with what their sister said, and they, together with the master, went forthwith to search the house. The master flew straight to the pile of linen, and began to run it through and through with his sword, fighting with it as if it had been Bucciolo himself, for he was well assured in his mind that Bucciolo was hidden thereunder. Wherefore Madonna Giovanna cried out: ‘Did I not tell you that he was out of his mind? You fool, to go and spoil all this good linen. It is easy to see that you never span it.’ When

they saw this the brothers were well assured that the master had gone mad, and after they had searched every place closely without finding anyone, one of them said, 'This man is indeed mad,' and the other cried out, 'By my faith, O master, you are guilty of a foul wrong when you try to make out that this sister of ours is a lewd woman.' Whereupon the master, who was mightily incensed, and was quite well assured in his own mind as to what had really happened, now broke out into a terrible passion against the brothers, and threatened them with the naked sword he held in his hand; whereupon each of the brothers caught up a stout stick and gave the master so sound a drubbing therewith that both of the sticks were broken over his back. Next they tied him up as a madman, saying that he had lost his wits through overmuch study, and all that night they remained in their sister's house.

On the following morning they sent

for a doctor, who caused a bed to be prepared for the master close to the fire, and gave orders that he should not be suffered to hold converse with anyone; that, when he should speak, no answer should be returned to him, and that he should be kept on very strict diet until his wits should be sharpened once more. And all these directions were carried out to the full.

The news how the master had gone mad was soon spread all through Bologna; whereupon all those who heard it grieved amain, saying one to the other, 'Of a certainty I suspected something of this sort yesterday, for the reason that he was quite unable to deliver his lecture.' And another one said, 'I too remarked that he was mightily changed.' So that on this account men went about saying that the master had gone mad, and divers of his acquaintance went in company to pay him a visit. Bucciolo, who knew naught of what had happened, went to the schools brimful with delight

to tell the master how he had fared last night, but when he arrived there he was told how the master had suddenly lost his wits. Bucciolo was greatly astonished at this, and found it almost incredible, and he went with the others to visit the sick man.

But when he came to the master's house he was seized with the greatest astonishment, and was ready to faint when he perceived how the case really stood; still, in order to let no suspicions get abroad, he went in with the rest, and when he entered the room he saw the master, all battered and bound with a rope, lying on the bed near the fire. All the scholars who were there went and condoled with him, saying how much grieved they were for what had happened. And Bucciolo felt that he must needs go and speak a word also; wherefore he drew near to him and said, 'My master, I am as sorely grieved for you as if you were my own father, and, if there be aught that I can do on your

behalf, do not fail to regard me as your own son.' The master answered and said, 'Bucciolo, Bucciolo, go your way in God's name, for you have learnt your task only too well, and learnt it, moreover, at my expense.' Madonna Giovanna, when she heard this, cried out, 'Take no heed of his words, for he raves and knows not what he is talking of.' Then Bucciolo took his leave and returned to Pietro Paolo, and said to him, 'My brother, I would have you stay here in Bologna, and finish your studies alone, in God's name. I, in sooth, have learnt so much that I am not minded to learn anything more.' And thus he went his way and returned to Rome, good luck attending him."

As soon as the novel was finished, Frate Aurette said, "My Saturnina, I have assuredly never listened to a better tale than this. Bucciolo certainly got his learning finely at the cost of his master. Now I am going to sing you a canzonet which a youth once upon a

time made in honour of his mistress, whom he loved better than his own life, when he chanced to see her clad in a tunic, with a bow in her hand." And thus he sang:

Lifting my eyes a maiden fair I spied,
With bow in hand and arrows by her side,

While meseemed her dainty weed,
Angel's colour white and fine.
Face and bosom, flowers indeed,
Bright as roses newborn shine.
I picture thus this lovesome damsel mine,
Whose clear and lucent eyes the golden stars outvied.

With Love's aid her bow she bent,
And those arms so soft and white
To my heart an arrow sent;
Faint I lay in woeful plight.
Of her my fancy tires not, and my sight
To gaze upon this radiant star is satisfied.

When first I saw her beauteous face
Whose slave I am by Love's decree,
With her divine and merry grace
She smiled and greeted courteously;
I gave her back her smile forthwith, and she
Caught up her bow and lodged an arrow in my side.

Her laughing eyes are like a bow,
Wherefrom those gilded darts are sped
More keen than those her hand doth throw.
Bear witness ye whose hearts have bled,
Ye upon whom her darts of proof are shed,
Which deepest in the life their barbs malignant hide.

Then with a sweet and amorous sign
My angel took farewell of me,
And gazing on this flower divine,
I cried, "Now go, and happy be,
For in thyself that sweet of love I see,
Excelling all, with thine own courtesy beautified."

As soon as the song was finished the two lovers clasped each other by the hand in joy and gladness, expressing mutual gratitude for the pleasure and delight they had experienced in their conversation, and after some further discourse together they said farewell and departed.

The Second Day.



The Second Day.

NOVEL I.

Madonna Corsina of Naples sends her son to study at Bologna, where he falls sick and dies. Of a device of his contrived so that his mother may not be over-grieved at his death.



WHEN the two lovers met in the parlour on the second day they greeted each other with eager longing, and then the fair Saturnina began to address Aurette in these words, and thus told her story :

“I am minded to tell you a tale of what happened at Naples to a widow lady and to her son, whom she had sent to study at Bologna. This lady lived in Naples, and was called by name Madonna Corsina. She was a native of

Capua, and was the wife of a goodly gentleman, one Messer Ramondo del Balzo, who, by the will of God, died and left her a widow and the mother of one son. This boy was named Carlo, and in his speech and actions he greatly resembled Messer Ramondo his father; wherefore his mother, who desired naught but his welfare, bethought her to send him to study at Bologna, in order that he might grow up a man of parts, which plan she duly carried out. She engaged for him a tutor, and provided him with books and with all that he needed, and, having commended him to God, sent him to Bologna, where she let him abide several years, and gave him whatsoever he might require.

The young man made the best use of his time at Bologna, and in a very short time became a capable scholar, so much so that he won the goodwill of all the students of the place on account of the excellent qualities he possessed and of the seemly and magnanimous life he

lived. Now it came to pass, when this youth had grown to man's estate, and had graduated in the law, and had got in order all his affairs for his return to Naples, he fell ill and like to die, whereupon all the physicians of Bologna came to him to try to cure him and save his life, but this they could not compass. Whereupon Carlo, when he perceived that he was beyond cure, spake in this wise to himself: 'I am not perturbed, nor do I make this plaint so much for my own sake, as for the sake of my disconsolate mother, who has no other child but me, and has expended all that she has in the world in the expectation that I should be the solace of her life; nay, indeed, she may have dreamt of forming some powerful family connection through my marriage, and have hoped that I should be the one to restore the fortunes of our house. And when she shall hear that I am dead, and that she may never see me more, of a truth she will die a thousand deaths.' Thus

he grieved more for his mother than for himself; and, as he let these thoughts pass through his mind, he pondered over what he should do in order to lessen his mother's grief; wherefore he wrote to her in these words: 'My dearest mother, I beg that you will send me a shirt sewn by the hand of that Neapolitan lady who is the merriest and the fairest and the least molested by care.' This letter came duly to the mother's hand; and, as soon as she had read it, she set forth to search and inquire for some lady who was unvexed by care—a difficult task in sooth, but one which she was anxious to compass so as to serve her son. At last, after seeking diligently, she found a certain lady who seemed to her more beautiful and merry than any other in the city; moreover, she bore herself like one unvexed by any care or trouble whatsoever. Whereupon Maddonna Corsina betook herself in friendly wise to the house of this young lady, who graciously bade her enter, and told

her that she was a thousand times welcome. Then Madonna Corsina spake and said, 'I wonder if perchance you can divine wherefore I have come to you ; it is, forsooth, because I think of you as the merriest woman in Naples, and the one least vexed with care and trouble. On this account I want you to do me a great service, to wit, that you will sew for me with your own hands a shirt which I may send to my son, who has begged me for a gift of the same.' Then said the young woman, 'You say that you have taken note of me, and esteemed me to be the happiest woman in Naples?' To this Madonna Corsina assented ; whereupon the young woman went on, 'I will now show you that it is quite otherwise with me, and that a more unhappy woman, or one with more sorrows and troubles, does not live on the face of the earth. To be assured that what I say is the truth, come with me now.' And having thus spoken, she took Madonna Corsina and


led her into an outward chamber, where she pointed out the body of a young man hung up by the neck from the cross-beam. Madonna Corsina, as soon as she beheld this, cried out, 'Alas! what means this?' and the young woman, sighing deeply, said, 'Madonna, this was a young man of great worth who was enamoured of me, but one day he was discovered by my husband, who straightway hanged him up here, as you now see him; and, in order to render me the more wretched, he makes me look upon this corpse every morn and every eve. I needs must see him, and you may judge how sharp a grief it is to be thus forced to behold him every morning and every evening. But if, in spite of all this, you are still minded that I should sew a shirt for you, I will willingly do the same, but I cannot do it as the happiest of women; nay, rather I am the most wretched woman there is or ever was in the world.'

Madonna Corsina, when she heard

this, was greatly astonished, and said, 'Of a truth, I see there is no one who is free from toil and tribulation, and those who are merriest in seeming are often in the most evil case.' Then she took leave of the young woman and returned home, and wrote word to her son that he must hold her excused, forasmuch as she could not send him such a shirt as he desired, because she could find no woman who was not afflicted with care and trouble as much as she could bear. A few days later a letter came to her, telling her that her son was dead; whereupon, being a wise woman, she took thought and said, 'I see there is no one in the world who is free from sorrow. Even the Virgin Mary, who was in sooth the woman of women, had her share; wherefore I will have patience, seeing that I am not alone. May God rest his soul, and not forget me!' In this wise she recovered her peace of mind, and spent her life in prosperity and good fortune."

NOVEL II.

Buondelmonte falls in love with Nicolosa, who had married one of the family of Acciaiuoli, foes of the Buondelmonti, and by the help of a serving-woman contrives to gain admission to her bed. The narrative of what the lady did thereupon: how peace was restored between the two families, and how the young man compassed his vengeance.

HEN Saturnina had brought her novel to an end, Frate Aurretto began and spake thus: "My Saturnina, I have found your story to be a masterly piece of work, and have got much pleasure therefrom in reflecting over the prudence of this young man, who, by means of his letter, kept his mother from dying of grief. However, I will now go on and tell you a tale which I think will please you.

One time there lived in Florence (where they live still) two noble fami-

lies, one called Buondelmonti and the other Acciaiuoli, who dwelt opposite to one another in a street called Borgo Santo Apostolo, each family being very illustrious and ancient. It happened that by a certain disagreement between them they became mortal enemies, and each party always went armed about the streets, keeping sharp watch the one on the other, and each one taking care to be on guard. One of the Acciaiuoli was married to a lady who was the proudest beauty in all Florence, and was named Nicolosa; and a certain youth of the Buondelmonti fell deeply in love with her. The lady could not move about her bedchamber without being seen by him from his own window, which was opposite, and many a time he had sight of her during the summer when she rose naked from her bed. Now Buondelmonte, being inflamed with love of her and conscious of the enmity of her husband, knew not what he should do, but one day he determined to speak to the

lady's waiting-woman ; and, observing this woman going to market in the morning, he called to her, and begged her to do him a service. Then he took from his purse six grossi, and said to her, 'Go and buy with this money whatsoever you will.' The maid, who was mightily pleased with the money, took it and replied, 'What would you have me do?' Buondelmonte answered, 'I would that you speak well of me to Madonna Nicolosa, and tell her from me that she is the sole joy of my life, and that it behoves her to take pity upon me.' The maid said, 'How can I ever tell her such a thing? You know that her husband is your enemy.' Buondelmonte went on, 'Trouble not yourself on this score ; only tell her what I have told to you, and let me know what answer she gives you.' Then the maid answered she would do as he desired.

One day it chanced that the lady and the waiting-woman were together at the window, when the last-named let forth

a deep sigh; whereupon her mistress asked her what ailed her. The maid answered that it was naught; but the lady went on and said, 'I desire you to tell me at once what is the matter with you, for people do not sigh so deeply without some cause.' The woman answered, 'Madonna, you must pardon me, for I can never tell you.' 'I must assuredly know,' said the lady, 'otherwise I shall be wroth with you.' Then said the woman, 'Since you are so keenly set to know, I will tell you. The truth is, that the young Buondelmonte who lives opposite has begged me, over and over again, to carry a message to you, but I have never found the courage to do this thing.' The lady said, 'Well, and what did this wretch say to you?' The maid replied, 'He bade me tell you that there is no one in the world he holds in such kindly regard as yourself, and that there is nothing he would not do for your sake, so great is the love he has for you. He begs,

too, to be suffered to become your faithful servant, for he will be under your command alone, and declares that he shall hold himself as most highly favoured if he may only do somewhat to give you pleasure.' To this the lady answered, 'The next time he holds any such discourse with you, see that you give him a slap on the face, and come no more to me with tales like this, for you know well that he is my husband's enemy.' The maid waited a little; then she went out and called Buondelmonte, and said to him, 'She will not hear of you or of your doings.' Buondelmonte answered, 'Be not amazed at this. It is what ladies always do the first time; but take care, the next chance that comes, and when she is in good humour, that you tell her this once more, and that I am mad with love of her. Then I promise you that you shall have a smarter gown than the one you are now wearing.' The maid answered, 'Let me alone to do this.'

One day, when Madonna Nicolosa was about to go to a merry-making, and her maid was helping her to dress, it came to pass that they began to converse on the same matter, and the lady said, 'Has this wretch had any more to say to you?' The maid straightway fell to weeping, and answered, 'I would that I had died the hour and the day I came to abide in this house.' The lady asked her why, and the woman replied, 'Because Buondelmonte has laid siege to me, and I can neither stay at home nor go abroad without finding him hovering about me, standing with his arms crossed, and begging me to tell you how he is pining and wasting away for your sake, and how he is blessed indeed whenever he hears you, or sees you, or listens to others talking about you. In sooth, I have never seen devotion greater than his, and I, for my own part, know not what more to say to you, except to pray you in God's name to relieve me of this trouble and grief; or to give me leave

to depart and disappear from the world, or to kill myself, so as to be rid of him; forasmuch as he knows so well how to supplicate me, and speaks so delightfully that I cannot think how anyone can say him no. I wish greatly that it might have been consistent with your honour to have listened to him just once, so that you might see whether I tell the truth or no.' The lady asked, 'Is he really so mad with love of me as you say?' Whereto the maid answered that he was lovesick a hundredfold more than she had said. Then the lady went on, 'The next time you see him, tell him, from me, to send me a gown of cloth like that which his sister wore this morning in church. And to this the maid answered that she would do what the lady desired.

Now, when Madonna Nicolosa had gone out, the maid went to Buondelmonte and told him all her mistress had said. 'Wherefore,' she added, 'you must keep your wits about you, and

consider what you have to do.' Buondelmonte answered, 'Leave this for me to do, and good luck go with you.' He at once got him a fine gown of the stuff the lady had asked for, and caused it to be steeped and dressed; and, when it seemed to him due time, he gave a sign to the maid and said, 'Carry this to the lady whose servant I am, and tell her that this cloth, and my soul and body, are ever at her disposal.' The maid made haste and bore it quickly to the lady, saying, 'Buondelmonte declares that this cloth, and his soul and body, are ever at your commands.' The lady took the cloth, and, having looked at it, said, 'Now go and tell my Buondelmonte I thank him hugely, and bid him be in readiness to come to me whenever I may send for him.' The woman hastened to Buondelmonte and gave him the message, whereto he answered, 'Tell her that I am always ready to do her pleasure.'

It happened that the lady—the better

to carry out the design she had formed — feigned to be ill, wherefore the physician was quickly fetched to see her. She declared that she would fain have a room on the ground floor, and her husband at once made them get ready a couch in a room there, which was furnished with everything she required. When this was done, she went to rest therein, together with a chambermaid and her own waiting-woman. Her husband every evening when he came home would ask his wife how she fared, and, after tarrying with her for a short time, would retire to his own room. Every morning and evening the doctor paid his visit, and everything necessary was always at hand. Now, when the lady deemed that the time was fitting, she sent word to Buondelmonte bidding him come to her the following night at nine o'clock; and to him it seemed that this hour was a thousand years in coming. When it was time, he went in careful wise and well prepared to the door of the lady's house, and when

he knocked thereat they opened to him, and he went in. Thereupon the lady took him by the hand and led him into the room, and, having made him sit down beside her, asked him how he fared. Buondelmonte replied, 'Madonna, I fare well enough now that I have won your goodwill.' The lady went on: 'My Buondelmonte, I have kept my bed for the past eight days, so that we might the more privily come together. Now I have let prepare a bath of sweet-smelling herbs, in which I am minded that we should bathe together; and this done, we will go to bed.' Buondelmonte, when he heard this, declared he was ready to do anything which the lady might desire.

She next made him undress himself and get into the bath, which was in a corner of the room; that he should lie down and cover himself within with a linen sheet, and throw a serge cloth over the whole, in order that no heat might escape. When he had undressed and got into the bath, the lady said, 'Now I

will undress also and come to you.' Then she took all Buondelmonte's clothes, even his shoes, and put them in a cupboard, and locked the door, and, having put out the light, she threw herself upon the bed, and began to cry aloud, ' Help, help ! ' and to raise a huge uproar. Buondelmonte jumped out of the bath straightway, and began to search for his clothes without finding them, and, because it was dark, he could not manage to knock at the door ; wherefore, helpless and knowing that he had been befooled, he went back to the bath half dead. By this time the whole house was alarmed, and Acciaiuolo and his servants caught up their arms, so that all the household was ready prepared in an instant. The lady's chamber was filled with men and women, and well-nigh everyone in that quarter of the city armed himself on account of the feud between these two families. Now think what Buondelmonte must have felt when he found himself thus stark

naked in his enemy's house, and knew that the room was full of his foes armed to the teeth ! Wherefore he commended his soul to God, and with his arms crossed, he awaited his death. The husband asked Nicolosa what ailed her, and she answered, I was taken with a sudden illness and vertigo and faintness, so great that meseemed my heart had been turned round in my body.' The husband replied somewhat angrily, ' I feared I should at least find you dead, considering the noise you made.' Thereupon the women round about her began to rub her arms and her feet, while some brought hot cloths, and others rose water; the men having left the room. The husband said, ' This is a sudden illness which has seized my wife, though indeed she has been somewhat ailing for many days past.' Soon afterwards the crowd went away, the husband going up to his room above to get to bed, but several women remained to bear the lady company.

After a little time the lady feigned that her distemper had passed away ; whereupon she bade the women around her good night, saying, ‘ I should be grieved if you were to pass a bad night on my account.’ So they departed, leaving with her the chambermaid and the waiting-woman. As soon as they were gone she got up and bade them bring a pair of clean sheets and make the bed afresh ; and, when she deemed the time had come, she dismissed the maids, and then, having locked the door and kindled a taper, she went to the bath, where she found Buondelmonte now little better than a dead man. She spoke to him, but he said nothing ; and then she got into the bath beside him, embracing him and saying, ‘ My Buondelmonte, here am I, thy Nicolosa ; hast thou not a word to say to me ? ’ And with these words she took hold of him, and dragged him out of the bath, and put him in the bed, and warmed him, saying the while, ‘ I am thy Nicolosa,

Nicolas Daggling Bonabelmontes
From the Bath

The Second Day
SECOND NOVEL

THE SECOND DAY.

After a little time the lady perceived that her chamberlain had passed away; whereupon she bade the women around her good night, saying, "I should be grieved if you were to pass a bad night for my account." So they departed, leaving with her the chambermaid and the waiting-woman. As they were gone she got up and made them bring a pair of clean sheets and make

Nicolosa Dragging Boundelmontes From the Bath

The Second Day

SECOND NOVEL

now it is better than a good night. She spoke to him, but he said nothing, and then she got into the bath, and found him, embracing her and saying, "Boundelmonte, I am thy Nicolosa; hast thou not a word to say to me?" And when these words she took hold of him, and dragged him out of the bath, and put him in the bed, and warmed him, saying the while, "I am thy Nicolosa."



whom thou hast so ardently desired to have all this time; now thou hast me in thy power, and canst do with me as thou wilt.' But he, poor rogue, was so disabled with cold that he could not even speak. After a little, however, he recovered somewhat and said, 'Madonna, be kind enough to give me leave to depart.' Then the lady, seeing what mind he was in, arose, and, having opened the closet, brought forth all his clothes and accoutrements; and he, when he had dressed himself, bade her farewell and said, 'Madonna, may God be good to you, I have had enough this time.' And thus he departed to his home, where he lay for more than a month by reason of the fright he had gotten.

But before long, through the chattering of the women, this story began to be heard in the city without the names of the actors therein: it was simply the tale how a certain lady had put a flout upon a lover of hers, and this became

the gossip of all Florence. When Buondelmonte heard it he many a time feigned that it in no way concerned him, and kept silent awaiting his time. And it chanced after a while that peace was restored between the two houses, and they who were formerly foes became friends and brethren, especially Buondelmonte and Nicolosa's husband, for night and day they kept company. One morning Madonna Nicolosa called her maid and said, 'Go and tell Buondelmonte I marvel greatly that, now there be opportunities in plenty, he never sends a word to me.' The maid went and spake thus : 'My lady is greatly surprised that, now you have the chance, you have naught to say to her.' Buondelmonte answered, tell Madonna Nicolosa that I was never so much her slave as I am now, and if she will come one evening and sleep with me, I shall hold myself highly favoured indeed.' The maid went back and bore this message to the lady, who replied,

‘Tell him that I am ready to do as he desires, but that he must hit upon a scheme to make my husband sleep abroad some night. Then I will come to him.’ The maid went back and told this to Buondelmonte, who was greatly pleased thereat, and said, ‘Tell your lady to leave the settlement of all this to me, and that she had better not have any hand therein.’

Buondelmonte forthwith contrived that an invitation to supper should be sent to Acciaiuolo from Camerata, a place about a mile away from Florence, and furthermore arranged with the giver of the feast that the guest should be detained for the night at the inn, and this plan was duly carried out. Then, when the lady’s husband had gone out to supper, she went to Buondelmonte’s house, as it had been agreed, and he gave her very gracious welcome in a room on the ground floor. Next, after much chatting and diversion, Buondelmonte said to the lady, ‘I pray you get

to bed ;' whereupon she straightway undressed herself and did as he directed. Buondelmonte took all her clothes, and, having opened a coffer, he put them therein, and said to her, 'I must go upstairs now, but I will return anon.' Whereupon the lady bade him go and return quickly. He then departed and locked the door behind him, and, when he had taken off his clothes, he went to bed with his wife, and left Nicolosa by herself. The lady lay expecting Buondelmonte's return, and when he came not she began to be afeared, remembering the trick she had played him with the bath, and said to herself, 'Of a truth he is minded to take vengeance upon me.' In this plight she got up and searched for her clothes, and, as she could not find them, she became half dead with terror. Then she went back to bed, and in what a pass she found herself everyone may well imagine.

When it was about half-past nine Buondelmonte got up and went out of

the house, and as he issued from the door he beheld Acciaiuolo seated upon a nag, bearing a hawk upon his fist, and just coming back from Camerata. After they had saluted one another Acciaiuolo took Buondelmonte by the hand and said, 'I can tell you that we have had fine cheer with capons and roasted quails galore, and the best wine I ever drank. All the evening we had you in mind, and lamented that you could not come with us to this feast, which certes you would have enjoyed amain.' Buondelmonte answered, 'And this last evening I have had to sleep with me the fairest lady in all Florence; nay, I have her still in my room. Never before have I tasted such sweet delight.' Then said Acciaiuolo, 'I would fain see her;' and taking Buondelmonte by the arm, he declared that he would not go away until he should have looked upon the lady. Buondelmonte said, 'I will let you see her willingly, but I desire that you speak not to her in my house. Nevertheless,

I will see that, if you are so minded, you shall have her in your own house to-morrow night, when you may take with her whatsoever pleasure you list.' To this the other agreed, and then they went into the room where lay the lady, who, as soon as she perceived that her husband was there, almost fainted, saying to herself, 'I have verily fallen into a nice trap, but 'tis what I deserve,' and she gave herself up for dead. She meantime had thrown herself upon the bed without any great heed of decency, and Buondelmonte and her husband came anear with a lighted torch ; but first of all Buondelmonte took hold of the bed-clothes, and covered her face therewith, in order that her husband might not know who she was. Then he went to the foot of the bed and began to uncover her feet and legs, one standing on either side of the bed. Buondelmonte said, 'Did you ever see legs so round and pretty as these legs, which look as if they were of ivory?' Then they went

on to uncover her bit by bit as far as her bosom, where were her two little breasts round and firm, the fairest sight ever seen. When they had seen everything there was to be seen up to her bosom, and had let their eyes have free course so as to assure themselves what sweet pleasure might be had with such a lady, Buondelmonte put out the light, and, taking hold of Acciaiuolo, led him forth from the room, having promised him that he should have the lady with him before night. Whereupon Acciaiuolo said, 'Of a surety I never espied a lovelier creature than this one, or one with a skin so fair and white. Where and how did you meet with her?' Buondelmonte answered, 'Trouble not your wits about how I got her;' and thus talking they came to the loggia, and joined a circle of other men who were there, the talk being all about the business of the town council. When Buondelmonte saw that Acciaiuolo was engaged in an argument thereanent, he

hurried back to his room, and, having opened the chest, he drew therefrom the lady's clothes, and bade her dress herself, and beckoned to the maid to come and accompany her home. He let her out by a back door into an alley, so that it might appear she was returning from church, and she went back into her house as if naught had happened. In this fashion Buondelmonte took vengeance upon Madonna Nicolosa for the trick she had played him, as I have already told you."

When she had finished her story, Saturnina said, "Which one of these two, think you, was in the sorest terror?" The friar replied, "I reckon it was Buondelmonte, for a double reason." But Saturnina said, "By my faith, I believe that the lady was in the greatest fear, because she came nearer than Buondelmonte to be seen and recognized; but, let it be how it may, we will judge thereanent some other time. Now I will sing you a canzonet which,

methinks, you will find to your liking.

One morning greeted me a maiden bright,
Sweet as an angel, as the ermine white.

Her tresses mocked the lion's tawny sheen,
Her eyes like eyes of falcon peregrine,
Stately as Juno's bird her walk and mien,
And lovelier than an angel in my sight.

For never had mine eyes beheld a thing
So fresh and fragrant ; like the birth of spring,
Like to the rose in splendour blossoming,
Richer than ruby, pearl, or chrysolite.

Like to a lily pure just gathered,
On cheek and breast such dainty grace is shed ;
With golden tresses wound about her head,
Lovelier then than flower in garden of delight.

When first my loving eyes on her were bent,
An arrowy glance into my heart she sent ;
Then she cried peace in wanton blandishment,
And I took leave with courtesy polite.

I listen to her words of kindly grace,
Upon her lips divine the charm I trace ;
Then she reveals the radiance of her face,
Sweeter than bower with jasmine bloom bedight.

Go, little song, to this dear star of mine !
What other maid can match her charm divine ?
And when my arms around her shall entwine,
Her lips shall give me hundredfold delight.”

After the canzonet was duly sung, the two lovers took each other by the hand in a modest fashion, and brought their delightsome converse to an end, for that evening taking leave with words full of courtesy. Then they went their several ways, and retired to their lodging with great content.

The Third Day.



The Third Day.

NOVEL I.

Don Placido, a Florentine, travelling to Abignon, finds companionship at Nice in Provence with a friar who is also bound to the Pope's court. But it transpires that the friar aforesaid is really a lady of Viterbo, who is going to join a certain cardinal. Of the good fortune which befell Don Placido on the road until he came to Abignon.



WHEN on the third day the two lovers went back to their accustomed meeting-place, wherein they found such dear delight, they were glad and gay beyond measure, and Frate Aurette began and spake thus : " My Saturnina, I am fain to tell you a novel which I doubt not will please you greatly, and this it is.

In the Val di Pesa, a country district of Florence, there lived in days past a priest named Don Placido, who, on account of certain troubles which befell him, determined to go to Avignon. He betook himself in the first place to Pisa, where he embarked and sailed as far as Nice in Provence, and, having landed, he took lodging in an inn kept by one Bartolomeo da Siena. After he had gone to bed, a worthy fellow, a servant of the host, entered the room and said to the priest, ‘Messere, two friars have come here to lodge, and one of them is sorely ill; wherefore, as there is a great scarcity of priests in these parts owing to the recent plague, I beg you to come to him and see how he fares.’ The priest answered that he would go willingly, and straightway donned his habit and went to the friar’s chamber. One of the friars said to him, ‘Messere, I commend to your good offices this father, my companion.’ Whereupon the priest sat down upon the bed and began to con-

fess the sick friar, and to remind him of his soul's health, telling him and urging him that it behoved him to make his peace with God. But the good friar seemed indisposed to listen to this counsel, and in a short time died like one in despair.

The other friar, who was the younger of the two, when he saw that his companion was dead, began to weep aloud. The priest consoled him, begging him to take comfort forasmuch as all men were mortal ; and after a short time the priest took his leave, and prepared to return to his own chamber. The friar said to him, ' Messere, I beseech you in God's name not to forsake me, but to find means to give burial to this dead man, paying him all due honour,' and with these words he took from his side a purse in which were some thirty florins, and went on, ' Take this ; spend what is needful, and pay all charges.' The priest took the purse, and, having called the men and maidservants of the inn and

given drink money to each, he despatched them to get in order all things necessary for the burial, so that in the morning everything was in readiness to bury the friar in seemly fashion. When the priest had paid all he went back to the other friar, and comforted him, and gave him back the purse with the residue of the money. But the friar, weeping the while, inquired of him whither he was bound, and the priest replied that he was going to Avignon. Then the friar said, 'I will gladly accompany you;' whereupon the priest agreed, saying, 'I am ready and willing to have your company, for it is better for each of us to travel together than alone.' At these words the friar raised his eyes and seemed in better heart, and the priest, when he had looked at his companion, thought that he had never before seen eyes so beautiful.

To make matters clear I must tell you that this friar was indeed a certain gentlewoman of Viterbo as you will

hear later on ; but the priest took her for a man, marvelling at the same time at those beautiful eyes and that delicate face. As soon as they had agreed to travel in company the friar gave to the priest fifty florins, and said to him, ' Defray all expenses and pay the host what is due ; ' which thing the priest did accordingly, and then, having mounted their horses, they rode towards Avignon. The friar, so as not to be recognized, concealed his face with his hat and his cowl, and spake little, and always rode behind ; wherefore the priest, deeming that he did this out of grief for his dead comrade, would now and again sing a canzonet and say some jesting words, so as to drive away these melancholy humours ; but the friar still remained silent and pensive, and hung his head. Now one evening they arrived at a town called Grasse, and dismounted at an inn kept by a certain widow, whose daughter a short time before had likewise lost her husband by death. This young

woman was very gracious and fair to look upon, and, when the travellers had dismounted, she cast many a glance upon the friar, and, marking how graceful and comely was his seeming, she fell in love with him and gazed upon him without ceasing. The friar said to his companion, 'Ask them for a room with two beds in it,' and the hostess at once did his bidding. The daughter of the hostess cooked the supper with her own hands, and did great honour to the guests, talking the while continually with the friar and offering him wine on divers pretences as he sat at table. The priest perceived what her fancy was, but he dissembled and said to himself, 'In sooth I do not wonder that she should have lost her wits over this youth, for I have not seen so pretty a fellow for many a long day.' When supper was finished the priest went out, so as to leave the others more at their ease, pondering whether this friar might not be the son of some rich man or other, and bound

for Avignon to seek preferment, seeing that he had with him plenty of money.

When bedtime had come the priest returned to the inn and said, 'Messere, shall we go to bed?' and the friar agreed; and when they had gone into the chamber the daughter of the hostess sent by the hand of one of the servants a box of sweetmeats and some excellent wine. The priest laughed and said, 'Of a certainty you must have repeated the paternoster of San Giuliano this morning, for you could not have found a better lodging or a fairer or more gracious hostess;' and he began to jest with the friar, who laughed somewhat, and then they made merry over the wine. The priest went on, 'Certes, I will never again travel hereby without tarrying at this inn; but it will behoove me always to have you with me, for all this honour is done to you, and not to me.' The friar replied, 'In truth this young woman is pleasing enough;' and the priest cried out, 'Would that she were going to sleep

between us two to-night!’ ‘Alack! what is it you say?’ said the friar; whereupon the priest replied, ‘Wait, and we shall see.’

Meantime the young woman had hidden herself, for she was minded to see in which bed the friar was going to sleep, and she partly saw and heard what went on between these two. With every word he spoke she was more and more pleased with the seemly manners of the friar, and what time he delayed getting into bed seemed to her a thousand years. Of her spying the friar knew nothing, and after further talk he got into one of the beds and the priest into the other. The young woman when she perceived they were both asleep, lighted a candle and went softly to the friar’s bed, and began to undress herself, and, this done, she lay down beside him. The friar, being aroused, raised his head at once and saw it was the young woman; whereupon he quickly put out the light, and, having caught up his cloak so as not to

be recognized, he got into the priest's bed and lay down on one side thereof. The hostess's daughter was covered with shame and stole out of the room; but the priest neither saw nor heard aught of what had passed, and, having had his first sleep, he felt a desire to turn over, and in doing this he touched his bedfellow with his arm. He was mightily astonished at this; and when he stretched out his hand and touched a bosom, he knew that it was a woman in bed with him, and made sure that it was the daughter of the hostess, saying to himself, 'This girl deems she has gone to bed with the friar, but she has come to me instead, and certes I will not fail to give her that which she has come a-seeking.' So he turned to her forthwith, and twice gave her full satisfaction. The friar did not move, and assuredly was well content, while the priest went to sleep again.

When it was near morning the priest awoke, and called his bedfellow, saying,

‘Ho there! get up; it is almost day; get up, so that your mother may not know where you have been.’ The girl, when she heard what the priest said, saw that he had not recognized her: wherefore she sat up in the bed, and broke out into the heartiest laughter, and then began to dress herself. Having drawn the cowl over her head, she stood before the priest, who at once saw it was the friar, and made the sign of the holy cross. He wellnigh lost his wits for joy when he beheld her twisting up her hair, for her tresses were so fair and bright that they shone like the sun; and, when they had dressed themselves, they let saddle their horses, and called the hostess and paid her what they owed. Then the daughter of the hostess said to the priest, ‘Messere, this companion of yours is mightily unsociable.’ The priest answered, ‘Ah, madonna, you do not rightly know him. I for my part maintain that I never had a more friendly companion; but he is not used to travel.’

The young woman replied, 'It indeed seems so.' And then they took their leave and set forth on their journey. The disguised lady rode in advance, and every time she turned round she perceived the priest to be as if lost in thought, for he was ever thinking over what had happened, which seemed to him a strange thing indeed. Wherefore the friar waited for him, and said, 'Yesterday, Messere, it was I who went with a thoughtful face, to-day it is your turn. Now I desire that you think no more of this matter; and, to banish your troublous thoughts, I will tell you who I am; and whither I am bound. It is indeed true that I am no friar, but a woman, as you know full well. My name is Petruccia, and I am the daughter of Vannicello da Viterbo, who in dying left me under the guardianship of my two brothers. It came to pass that when Pope Urban travelled through those parts, he tarried, as you may have heard, divers days at Viterbo, and during

this visit a certain cardinal, whom you will see hereafter, came by God's will to lodge in our house, and became so greatly enamoured of me, and pressed me so hotly, that I yielded myself to him. When the court moved on into Provence, the cardinal took me with him, keeping me always by his side, and giving me very honourable treatment, and loving me better than himself. But when the pope went to Ponti di Sorga my lover accompanied him, and left me behind in Avignon, with two waiting-women and an equerry. It was then that one of my brothers, on his return from San Jacopo, arrived in Avignon, and began to search for me; and one Saturday morning, when I had gone to hear mass in the church of Sant Asideri, this brother of mine went thither likewise, taking with him an intimate friend. When his eyes and mine met, he recognized me, and having seized me, bore me away forthwith down to the Rhone, where he had got ready a boat for his own

voyage. I was taken on board this, and we did not halt until we reached Arles. Then we travelled by Marseilles, Nice, Genoa, Leghorn, and Corneto, my brother being minded many times during the voyage to cast me into the sea, and this, indeed, he would have done but for his friend, who held him back. While we were together on the boat this gentleman became enamoured of me, and asked me in marriage of my brother, who readily gave consent, and I was willing to take him as my husband. Having come to Viterbo he made me his wife with great rejoicing, and took me to his house, but by the will of Fortune he died a month later, and it is because of his death that I went away; for, he being dead, I was forced to go back to live with my brothers, and I abode with them until lately in great weariness and tribulation. My two sisters-in-law compelled me to be their servant, and for the slightest fault they reproved me, and called me a lewd woman, wherefore

I suffered greatly. One day, however, I chanced to see pass a courier bound for Avignon, and to him I gave a letter addressed to Monsignore, in which I set forth all that had befallen me, and told him that if he wished to have me back he had better send for me by some person in whom I could trust. Whereupon he sent the same friar who died at Nice, a worthy man, to whom he promised to give the first bishopric which might fall vacant, if I should be brought safely to Avignon. The friar arrived at Viterbo, and found occasion to speak with me in the church of the Augustinians, where he showed me a letter under the cardinal's signature and other testimonies, and then we determined what course we should follow. After our plans were set in order, my sister-in-law and some other ladies and I myself went one day to the baths of Asinella, and when all my companions had gone into the water, I made pretence of going out for a little, and, this



done, I withdrew quickly and went into a wood, where the friar was awaiting me. I stripped off my woman's garb, and donned a habit such as friars wear. Then we mounted our horses, which were ready for us, and in about three hours we came to Corneto, where the friar had let prepare a brigantine, upon which we embarked forthwith, and sent back our horses. The sailors put out to sea, and we sailed on till we came to Nice in Provence, the friar being afflicted so sorely with sea-sickness that he died, as you yourself saw—in sooth, he died out of despair that he was unable to take me to the lord cardinal. Now you know who I am, and whither I am bound; wherefore let us have a care to give ourselves a merry time on the road, and cast all trouble to the winds.' And so indeed it was, forasmuch as long as they fared together they took all the joy they were fain of, both at board and in bed, singing and jesting and making the long days seem short through the merri-

ment of their life ; indeed, the love between them waxed so mightily that it would be impossible to tell of all the sport they had together, nor was there ever known so genuine a comradeship as theirs. And it chanced, when they arrived at Avignon, that they dismounted at an inn which stood hard by the palace of the cardinal, and when night was come the so-called friar said to the priest, ‘ Say that you are my cousin, and that you have come hither in my company, and leave the rest to me ; ’ and the priest did as he was directed. Then the lady sent to the cardinal’s palace for one of the servants who was named Rubinetto, who, when he had come, straightway saw who the friar really was and rejoiced greatly. Then he ran over to the cardinal, saying, ‘ Monsignore, Petruccia has come back.’ Whereupon the cardinal was hugely pleased, and said, ‘ See that she be here when I return from the court, and do not fail in this.’ The servant brought her woman’s attire,

and the priest helped to dress her in the same, which indeed sat very jauntily upon her. And though the priest had fallen in love with her when he first beheld her in the friar's habit, he found her a thousandfold more lovable in woman's weeds, and that evening they exchanged a thousand kisses, shedding many tears the while. And in due time the servant came to fetch her, and led her away into the chamber of the cardinal, who, as soon as he returned, asked the servant whether Petruccia was there, and when he heard that she had come, he ran straightway to the room, and kissed and embraced her a hundred times.

Then she told him the whole adventure, how her brother had taken her away by force, and said, 'For greater safety I brought with me a cousin of mine who is a priest, and he out of regard for you has never left me, but has brought me to you with no small trouble.' The next morning the cardinal sent for the priest and thanked

him, and, having made him note down all he had to ask, the cardinal granted him every favour he could wish for; moreover, he gave the priest raiment, and did him the greatest honour what time he abode in Avignon. So great was the love Petruccia had for the priest, that she refrained not by night or by day from commending him to the cardinal, who came to hold him in such high esteem that he promoted him to a leading place in his house. Now it happened that after a time the priest got what he wanted from the court of Avignon, wherefore he determined to return to his home, which thing proved a cruel sorrow to Petruccia, but when she saw he was minded thereto she submitted. The day of his departure she led him to her chest, in which was a casket full of florins, and bade him take as many of these as he would. The priest replied, 'My Petruccia, it is enough for me that I bear away with me your goodwill; that is all

I desire ; gifts of other kind I have no mind for.' Petruccia, when she saw how warm was the love the priest bore her, drew from her finger a very fine ring, and gave it to him, saying, 'Take this, and wear it for the love of me, and never part with it till you shall find some woman fairer than I am.' The priest answered, 'These are mere words. You had better keep the ring, forasmuch as to my mind there was never yet born a woman more beautiful and lovesome than you.' Then the lady with many tears clasped him round the neck with her arms, and he clasped her, kissing each other often on the mouth and pressing each other's hands. So they said farewell, and the priest, when he had taken his leave of the cardinal, returned to his home, good luck attending him."

NOVEL II.

Ceccolo of Perugia, having wasted all his substance over Isabella, the wife of one Lapo, a Florentine, takes service with Lapo as a page. The craft of the lady in taking her pleasure with Ceccolo, and in making him beat her husband with a stick; and how it fell out that the husband held Ceccolo dearer than ever, notwithstanding.



THE novel being finished, the graceful Saturnina began and said, "My Aurette, what you have told me has pleased me greatly, and I will now tell you a story which, perchance, you may find as diverting as your own — one dealing with a merry device of a certain lover with a lady of Florence, which thing fell out as I will now tell.

There lived once in Florence a very fair lady named Madonna Isabella, the wife of one Lapo, a rich merchant. No other lady of the city was so much

admired as Isabella, for she was by far the most beautiful, and the fame of her was spread through all Tuscany, by reason of her loveliness and courtesy and gracious carriage. It chanced that her fame reached the ears of a certain rich youth of Perugia, called Ceccolo di Cola Raspanti. It was moreover told to him how divers gallants jousted to gain her love ; wherefore he bought him horses and implements for jousting, and, having clad himself in rich and honourable fashion, and put in his purse money enough, and betaken himself to Florence, he began to scatter his gold and to consort with the young gallants of the city. After a few days had passed, he was seized with desire to behold the lady, and as soon as he saw her he fell in love with her, saying to himself, ‘ Certes, she is still fairer than I had ever believed she could be.’ And then he began to seek her presence, and to pass frequently by her house, and to play and sing to her, and to give banquets and suppers

out of the love he had for her, besides frequenting all feasts and weddings where she would likely be present. He jousted and ran courses, and went on horseback, and clad his servants richly, and gave here a garment and there a horse, all for love of her. And thus, while his chattels and his money lasted, he was well looked upon and received everywhere with honour, but every day he sent word home to let sell or pledge some one or other of his goods in order to enable him to go on spending as he had begun. This went on for a time, but having come to the end of his possessions, he found himself still unable to leave Florence, so great was the love he bore this lady.

Therefore one day he made up his mind, seeing that his means were now all gone, to offer himself to serve as page to the husband of the lady aforesaid. In this he met with the success he hoped for, inasmuch as he found means to engage himself to Lapo, the

husband of Madonna Isabella, serving him at table, and accompanying him whithersoever he might go in town or country. And Lapo was well attended and served by him, and held him very dear when he saw how knowing and expert he was. Wherefore Ceccolo remained for some time in Messer Lapo's service.

But it fell out that Ceccolo continued to be still inflamed with love for his lady; wherefore, finding her one day alone, he said to her, 'Madonna, I commend myself to you, inasmuch as, of everything God has created, there is naught I have ever loved and revered so much as yourself, and as to the past you may determine whether this be true or no. For love of you I have spent all I had in the world, and I hold myself most highly favoured that I now stand here as your servant, for thus I can at least enjoy the sight of you.' The lady answered, 'Deem not that I forget all you have done for my sake,

but I thought that you took no more thought of me, for of late you have never given me word or sign.' Ceccolo replied that he had done this by way of biding his time, and the lady said, 'Come to my bed this night, and see that you come to the further side thereof; and if I should chance to be sleeping, touch my hand gently, so that Lapo may not hear you. I will leave the door open, and put out the light; wherefore come to me without fear, and trust to me to do the rest.' And to this Ceccolo answered that he would do her bidding.

After nightfall, at the hour appointed by the lady, Ceccolo went and found the chamber door open, and the light extinguished; and, having crept up to the bed on the further side, took hold of the lady's hand. As soon as she was aroused, she took him gently by the arm and holding him tight, said to Lapo, 'Husband, I would fain talk to you of the fidelity of some of your house servants; for this very day Ceccolo came

and sought to make dishonest love to me, and I, wishing that you might entrap him, told him that I would meet him to-night in the loggia. Therefore, if you wish to catch him, put on my raiment, and wrap a cloth round your head, and go down to the loggia. There you will certainly find him, for he will come in the hope of meeting me, and you will know that this story is true.' Thereupon Lapo got up and put on his wife's clothes, and, having gone down to the loggia, lay in wait for Ceccolo. And as soon as he was gone the lady took Ceccolo in her arms, and he returned her embraces, and they took together that delight which he had desired so long, and she likewise, exchanging the sweetest kisses meanwhile. Then the lady said to him, 'You have heard what I told my husband; now go down and rate him soundly, and take a stick with you and thrash him as hard as you can.' Ceccolo answered that she might leave this to him, and then he got up, and,

having taken a stick, he went down to the loggia, where he found the good man, who was waiting for him. Ceccolo then cried out, 'Ah ! wicked woman that you are, why should you think that I would ever consent to put so foul a wrong upon my master ? What I said to you yesterday was said to put you to the proof, and nothing else ; but it seems that you are brazen enough to wish to befool your husband, who, forsooth, is the best and worthiest gentleman in the city.' Then he up with the stick which he carried in his hand, and belaboured Lapo over the arms and back, saying, 'If I should ever see you misconducting yourself with anyone, I will tell Lapo thereof, so that he may cut your throat ; and if he shrink from such a task, I will do it myself.'

Wherefore the good man stole back into the house, feeling as if every bone in his body were broken ; and when he returned to the bedchamber, his wife asked him how he had fared, and he

answered, 'Right badly, forasmuch as I am bruised all over.' Then said the lady, 'Alas, alas! that cheating loon, has he had the hardihood to lay hands on you? May God give him a bad Easter and a bad year.' The husband replied, 'Vex not yourself over this, for I am even better disposed to him than to myself.' The wife said, 'But how can you be so kindly disposed to one who has thrashed you black and blue?' Then she got up and lighted a candle, and had care for Lapo's shoulders and arms, which were all livid from the blows he had received; and the lady, when she beheld them, made believe to weep and lament; but her husband said. 'Be quiet, and let me hear no more of this, for even if he had killed me I should have died content, after hearing what he told me.' The lady went on, 'Certes, he shall stay no longer in this house.' But Lapo replied, 'Take care, as you love your life, that you say not a word of this to him. Furthermore, I bid you

let him come into your room, by day and by night, whenever it may please him, for I am convinced that he holds me very dear, and of a surety I will never let him go away, for I believe that a more faithful servant was never born.' The next morning, Lapo, having bidden Ceccolo come to him, said, 'I am minded that this house should be as your own, and that you enjoy the right to live and die here, and come and go according as you may desire, for I have never had a servant who was so dear to me as you are.' Ceccolo answered, 'You must attribute all that I have done, or may do, to the love I have for you;' and Lapo said that he was well assured of that. Wherefore Ceccolo lived on in the house for a long time, and he and the lady enjoyed the sweetest delight together, Lapo suspecting naught amiss, and always committing his wife to Ceccolo's care what time he might be away from Florence. Thus these two found good occasion to fulfil all their

desires ; and, though a chambermaid told Lapo more than once that he was being put to shame by what went on in the house, he refused to believe her, and replied, saying, ‘ If I were to find him in the very act, I would not believe my eyes.’ On this account, Ceccolo and the lady lived pleasantly all the time of their lives, enjoying all the goodly things and happiness of the world.”

When Saturnina had made an end of her story, Aurette said, “ Certes, I never listened to a more diverting tale than this one. These two lovers were indeed well advised and knew how to play their game. But, as it is now my turn to sing you a song, I will sing one of a lover who had just made peace with his lady.” And he sang in this wise :

Blest be the day on which I read me clear
Forgiveness in the eyes I hold so dear.

Long time had I been stranger to those eyes,
Those truthful eyes, so sweet, so dearly loved.
Estranged were we by a false traitor’s lies,

Who to deceive my passion pure was moved ;
Now when I find he hath a traitor proved,
No heart a lighter load than mine doth bear.

My gentle lord, grant me this single boon :
If I so long in angry mood have striven,
That was the fault of this same traitor loon
Whose slanderous tongue thy love from mine
hath riven ;
Wherefore, I pray thee, hold me now for-
given,
So thou to me, and I to thee be near.

When in her presence I stood once again,
Where lonely bloomed erewhile that flower
divine,
She greeted and she gave me roses twain ;
With dainty vermeil lips she smiled benign.
I gave her but one loving tender sign.
We spake no word. I turned and left her there.

When my fair lady had my fault forgiven,
I lay the faithful slave of her behest.
I loved her boundlessly, she was my heaven,
Where after toil and labour I might rest.
I ever keep her image in my breast ;
Her love I prize, her constancy revere.

Go, little song, to this fair flower of nature,
That star above all other stars on high,

And make your prayer to this divinest creature,
That she will let all other swains go by ;
She who superior shines in form and feature,
I am her slave, and I her slave will die.

As soon as the song was finished the two lovers took one another by the hand, and with great delight exchanged their words of gratitude, saying that they could have wished the novel might have gone on for ever, seeing that they found their greatest happiness when they were together. Then they said farewell and went their several ways.

The Fourth Day.



The Fourth Day.

NOVEL I.

Giannetto after the death of his father goes to Venice, and is received as a son by Messer Ansaldo, a wealthy merchant. Being taken with desire to see the world, he embarks on a ship and sails to the port of Belmonte. What happened to him in his dealings with a certain widow lady of that place, who had promised to marry any man who should lie with her and have enjoyment of her.



WHEN the two lovers had come on the fourth day back to the convent parlour, their wonted meeting-place, they met with many gracious salutations, and when they had taken each other by the hand and had seated themselves, Saturnina said, "I will tell you a story which

shall be the sovereign and queen of all the stories we have told one to the other ; and I deem you will get great pleasure from hearing the same.

There was once in Florence, in the house of the Scali, a certain merchant called Bindo, who had sailed many times to Tana, near to Alexandria, and had likewise adventured in those other long voyages which are made for the sake of traffic. This Bindo, who was very rich, had three stalwart sons, and when he lay on his deathbed he bade come to him the eldest and the second born, and in their presence he made his will and left them heirs of all he possessed in the world. But to the youngest he left nothing. When the will was completed, the youngest son, who was called Giannetto, heard tell of the same, and went to his father's bedside and said, 'Father, I am greatly astounded at what you have done, in taking no thought of me in your testament.' The father answered, 'My Giannetto, there is no one living I

hold dearer than you, therefore I am not minded that you should tarry here after my death, but rather that you should betake yourself to Venice to your god-father, who is named Messer Ansaldo. He has no son of his own, and has written to me more than once to send you to him; moreover, I must tell you that he is the richest of all the Christian merchants. Wherefore I desire that you go to him after my death and give him this letter. If you manage your affairs with prudence, you will become a rich man.' The young man answered, 'My father, I am ready to do what you command.' Whereupon the sick man gave him his blessing, and in a few days' time breathed his last. All the sons lamented sorely, and buried their father with due honours.

When a few days had passed the two brothers called Giannetto, and said to him, 'Brother, it is true indeed that our father has made a will leaving us his heirs, and making no mention of you. Never-

theless, you are our brother, and from this time you shall have share in whatever may be left, equally with ourselves.' Giannetto answered, 'I thank you, my brothers, for what you offer, but I have made up my mind to seek my fortune in some other place. On this I am fully determined; wherefore you can take the heritage sanctified and assigned to you.' The brothers, when they saw what his will was, gave him a horse and money for his charges. Giannetto took leave of them, and having journeyed to Venice and gone to the warehouse of Messer Ansaldo, he delivered the letter which his father had handed to him on his deathbed; and Messer Ansaldo, when he had read the same, learned that the young man before him was the son of his dear friend Bindo. As soon as he had read it he straightway embraced Giannetto, saying, 'Welcome, dear godson, whom I have so greatly desired to see.' Then he asked news of Bindo, and Giannetto replied that he was dead;

whereupon Ansaldo embraced and kissed him, weeping the while, and said, 'I am sorely grieved over Bindo's death, inasmuch as it was by his aid that I won the greater part of my wealth ; but the joy I feel at your presence here is so great that it takes away the sting of my sorrow.' Then he led Giannetto to his house, and gave orders to his workpeople, and those about his person, as well as to his grooms and servants, that they should do service to Giannetto even more zealously than to himself. The first thing he did was to hand over to Gianetto the key of all his ready money, saying, ' My son, spend what you will ; buy raiment and shoes to suit your taste ; bid the townsfolk to dine with you, and make yourself known ; for I leave you free to do what you will, and the better you are liked by our citizens the better I shall love you.' So Giannetto began to keep company with the gentlefolk of Venice, to entertain, to give banquets and presents, to keep servants in livery, and to buy

fine horses; moreover, he would joust and tilt, because he was very expert, and magnanimous and courteous in everything he did. He never failed to give honour and respect where they might be due, and he revered Messer Ansaldo as if he had been a hundred times his father. So prudent was his carriage with men of all conditions that he won the goodwill of all the people of Venice, who regarded him as a youth of the greatest intelligence and most delightful manners, and courteous beyond measure; so that all the ladies, and the men as well, seemed in love with him. Messer Ansaldo had no eyes for any but him, so charmed was he with Giannetto's bearing and manners. Nor was any feast ever given to which he was not bidden.

It happened one day that two good friends of his determined to sail for Alexandria with some wares laden in two ships, as was their annual custom. They said to Giannetto, 'You ought to give yourself the pleasure of a voyage

with us, in order to see the world, especially Damascus and the parts thereabout.' Giannetto answered, 'In faith I would go willingly, if only Messer Ansaldo would give me leave.' They replied, 'We will see that he does this, be sure of that.' They went forthwith to Messer Ansaldo and said to him, 'We beg you to let Giannetto go with us this spring to Alexandria, and to give him a bark or vessel so that he may see something of the world.' Messer Ansaldo replied that he was willing to let Giannetto do as he liked, and the others assured him that the young man would be well pleased to go. Then Messer Ansaldo let prepare a very fine ship, which he loaded with much merchandise, and supplied with banners and arms and all that was necessary. And when all was in readiness Messer Ansaldo gave orders to the captain and the crew of the ship that they should do whatever Giannetto might direct, and he committed him to their care. 'For,' said he, 'I am not

sending him out for the sake of gain, but so that he may see the world as it best pleases him.' When Giannetto went to embark, all Venice came to see him, for it was long time since any ship so fine or so well furnished had left the port; and when he had taken leave of Messer Ansaldo and of his companions he put out to sea and hoisted sail, and steered the course for Alexandria in the name of God and of good fortune.

After these three friends in their three ships had sailed on several days it chanced that early one morning Giannetto caught sight of a certain gulf in which was a very fair port, whereupon he asked the captain what might be the name of the place. The captain replied that it belonged to a certain lady, a widow, who had brought many to ruin. Giannetto inquired how they had been undone, and the captain replied, 'Messere, this lady is very beautiful, and she has made it a law that, if any stranger lands there, he must needs share her

bed, and, if he should have his will of her, that he should have her to wife and be the lord of the town and of all the country round. But if he should fail in his venture, he must lose all he has.' Giannetto meditated for a moment, and then bade the captain land him at the port by some means or other, but the captain cried to him, 'Messere, take care what you do, for many gentlemen have landed there, and every one has been ruined.' But Giannetto said, 'Trouble not yourself about others; do what I tell you.' His command was obeyed; they put the ship about at once and made sail for the port, and those on board the other ships perceived not what was done.

In the harbour the next morning, when the news was spread that a fine ship had come into port, all the people flocked to see her, and it was told likewise to the lady, who forthwith sent for Giannetto. He went to her with all haste and made respectful obeisance;

whereupon she took him by the hand and asked who he was, and whence he had come, and whether he knew the custom of the land. Giannetto answered that he did, and that he had come there by reason of this custom alone. The lady said, 'You are welcome a hundred-fold,' and all that day she treated him with the greatest honour, and bid come divers counts and barons and knights who were under her rule to keep Giannetto company. All these were mightily pleased with Giannetto's manners and his polished and pleasant and affable presence. Almost everyone felt kindly towards him, and all that day they danced and sang and made merry at the court for the sake of Giannetto, and everyone would have been well content to own him as over-lord.

When evening was come the lady took him by the hand and led him into the bedchamber, and said, 'Meseems it is time for us to go to bed.' Whereto Giannetto made answer, 'Madonna, I

am at your commands.' Then two damsels came, one bearing wine and the other sweetmeats, and the lady said, 'Surely you must be thirsty; drink of this wine.' Giannetto took some sweetmeats and drank of the wine, which was drugged to make him sleep, and he unwitting drank half a glass thereof, as it had the taste of good wine. Then he undressed and lay down on the bed, and fell asleep at once. The lady lay down beside him, but he woke not till it was past nine o'clock the next morning. As soon as it was day the lady arose, and made them begin unload the ship, which was filled with rich and fine merchandise. When nine o'clock had struck the waiting-maid went to the bed where Giannetto lay, and bade him rise and go his way with God's help, forasmuch as he had forfeited his ship and all that was therein. He was greatly ashamed, and conscious that he had fared very ill in his adventure. The lady bade them give him a horse and money for the way; and

he, after a sad and doleful journey, arrived at Venice, but he dared not for shame go home. He called by night at the house of one of his friends, who marvelled greatly at the sight of him, and said, 'Alas ! Giannetto, what means this?' and Giannetto made answer, 'My ship struck one night upon a rock, and became a wreck, and everything was broken up. One was cast here and another there, and I caught hold of a piece of wood, on which I reached the shore. I returned hither by land, and here I am.'

Giannetto tarried some time in the house of his friend, who went one day to see Messer Ansaldo, and found him in very melancholy mood. Ansaldo said, 'I am so sorely afeared lest this son of mine should be dead, or that he have met some ill fortune at sea, that I can find nor peace nor happiness, so great is my love for him.' The young man answered, 'I can tell you news of him ; he has been shipwrecked and has lost everything, but he has escaped with

his life.' 'God be praised for this,' said Messer Ansaldo; 'so long as he has saved himself I am contented, and care naught for what he has lost. But where is he?' The young man replied that Giannetto was in his house; whereupon Messer Ansaldo arose forthwith and was fain to go thither, and when he saw Giannetto he ran towards him and embraced him, saying, 'My son, you need feel no shame for what has befallen you, inasmuch as it is no rare thing for a ship to be wrecked at sea. Be not cast down, for, since no hurt has come to you, I can rejoice.' Then he took Giannetto home and cheered him the best he could, and the news spread through Venice, everyone being grieved for the loss which had befallen him.

Before long Giannetto's companions returned from Alexandria, having won great profit from their venture, and as soon as they landed they asked for news of him. When they heard his story they went straightway to greet him, say-

ing, 'How did you leave our company, and where did you go? When we lost sight of you, we turned back on our course for a whole day, but we could neither see aught of your ship nor learn where you had gone. Thus we fell into such grief that, for the whole of our voyage, we knew not what merriment was, deeming you to be dead.' Giannetto answered, 'An adverse wind arose in a certain inlet of the sea, which drove my ship on a rock near the shore, and caused her to sink. I barely escaped with my life, and everything I had was lost.' This was the excuse made by Giannetto to conceal his failure, and all his friends made merry with him, thanking God that his life had been spared, and saying, 'Next spring, with God's help, we will earn as much as you have lost this voyage; so let us now enjoy ourselves without giving way to sadness,' and they took their pleasure according to their wont. But Giannetto could not banish the thought of how he might return to

that lady, pondering with himself and saying, 'Certes, I must make her my wife or die,' and he could not shake off his sadness. Wherefore Messer Ansaldo besought him often that he should not grieve; for that, with the great wealth he possessed, they could live very well, but Giannetto answered that he could know no rest until he should have once more made that voyage over seas.

When Messer Ansaldo saw what his longing was, he let furnish for him in due time another ship, laden with yet richer cargo than the first, spending in this venture the main portion of his possessions; and the crew, as soon as they had stored the vessel with all that was needful, put out to sea with Giannetto on board, and set sail on the voyage. Giannetto kept constant watch to espy the port where the lady dwelt, which was known as the port of the lady of Belmonte, and, having sailed one night up to the entrance thereof, which was in an arm of the sea, he suddenly recog-

nized it, and bade them turn the sails and steer into it in such fashion that his friends on board the other ships might know naught of what he did. The lady, when she arose in the morning, looked towards the port, where she saw flying the flag of Giannetto's ship, and, having recognized it at once, she called one of her chambermaids and said to her, 'Know you what flag that is?' and the maid replied that it was the ship of the young man who had come there just a year ago, and who had left with them all his possessions to their great satisfaction. Then said the lady, 'It is true what you say, and certes he must be hugely enamoured of me, seeing that I have never known one of these to come back a second time.' The maid said, 'I indeed never saw a more courteous and gracious gentleman than he;' whereupon the lady sent out to Giannetto a troop of grooms and pages, who went joyfully on board the ship. He received them in like spirit, and then went up to the

castle and presented himself to the lady.

She, when she met him, embraced him with joy and delight, and he returned her greeting with reverent devotion. All that day they made merry, for the lady had bid come to her court divers ladies and gentlemen, and these entertained Giannetto joyfully for the love they bore him. The men grieved over the fate which was in store for him, for they would gladly have hailed him as their lord on account of his charm and courtesy, while the women were almost all in love with him when they saw with what dexterity he led the dance, and how he always wore a merry face as if he had been the son of some great lord. When it seemed to her time to retire, the lady took Giannetto by the hand and said, 'Let us go to bed,' and when they had gone into the chamber, and had disposed themselves to rest, two damsels came with wine and sweetmeats, whereof they ate and drank, and

then went to bed. Giannetto fell asleep as soon as he lay down ; whereupon the lady undressed and placed herself beside him, but he did not awake from sleep all night. As soon as it was day the lady arose and bade them quickly unload the vessel, and when it was nine o'clock Giannetto awoke, but on seeking for the lady he could not find her. Then he lifted up his head and perceived that it was broad day ; so he got up, covered with disgrace, and once more they gave him a horse and money for the journey, and said ' Go your way,' and he departed full of shame and sorrow. He journeyed for many days without halt till he came to Venice, and there he went by night to the house of his friend, who, when he saw him, was hugely amazed and said, ' Alas ! and what can this mean ?' Giannetto replied, ' I am in evil case. Accursed be the fortune which led me into that land !' His friend replied, ' Certes, you may well miscall your fortune, since you have

ruined Messer Ansaldo, the greatest and the richest of our Christian merchants ; but still your shame is worse than his loss.'

Giannetto lay hid some days in his friend's house, knowing not what to say or do, and almost minded to return to Florence without speaking a word to Messer Ansaldo ; but at last he determined to seek him, and when Ansaldo beheld him he arose and ran to him and embraced him, saying, 'Welcome to you, my son,' and Giannetto embraced him, weeping the while. Then, when he had learnt all, Messer Ansaldo said, 'Listen to me, Giannetto, and give over grieving ; for, as long as I have you back again, I am contented. We still have enough to allow us to live in modest fashion. The sea is always wont to give to one and to take from another.' It was soon noised abroad in Venice what had happened, and all men were much grieved over the loss which Messer Ansaldo had suffered, for he was obliged

to sell many of his chattels in order to pay the creditors who had supplied him with goods. It happened that the adventurers who had set sail with Giannetto returned from Alexandria with great profit, and as soon as they landed they heard how Giannetto had come back broken in fortune ; wherefore they were greatly amazed and said, ‘ This is the strangest matter that ever was.’ Then they went with great laughter and merriment to Messer Ansaldo and Giannetto and said, ‘ Messere, be not cast down, for we have settled to go next year to trade on your account, seeing that we have been in a way the cause of your loss, in that we persuaded Giannetto to go with us. Fear nothing, for as long as we have anything you may treat it as your own.’ On this account Messer Ansaldo thanked them, and said that he had as yet enough left to give him sustenance.

But it came to pass that Giannetto, pondering these matters day and night,

could not shake off his sorrow ; wherefore Messer Ansaldo demanded to know what ailed him, and Giannetto answered, ‘ I shall never know content till I have regained you what I have lost.’ Messer Ansaldo answered, ‘ My son, I would not that you should leave me again, for it will be better for us to live modestly on what is left to us than for you to put aught else to hazard.’ Giannetto said, ‘ I am determined to do all I can, forasmuch as I should hold myself to be in most shameful case were I to bide here in this fashion.’ Then Messer Ansaldo, seeing that his mind was set thereon, made provision to sell all that he had left in the world, and to equip for him another vessel ; and, after he had sold everything, so that he had naught left, he loaded a fine vessel with merchandise, and, because he wanted yet ten thousand ducats to complete his venture, he went to a certain Jew of Mestri, with whom he made an agreement that, if he should not repay the debt by Saint

John's day in the June following, the Jew should have the right to take a pound of his flesh, and to cut the same from what place so ever he listed. Messer Ansaldo having duly agreed, and the Jew having drawn up a binding document with witnesses, using all the precautions and formalities which the occasion demanded, the ten thousand gold ducats were handed over, and with the same Messer Ansaldo supplied all that was wanting in the ship's cargo. In sooth, if the other two vessels had been fine and fair, this third was much richer and better furnished. In like manner Giannetto's friends fitted out their vessels, with the intention of giving to him whatever they might gain by traffic.

When the day of departure had come and they were about to sail, Messer Ansaldo said to Giannetto, 'My son, you are going away, and you see with what bond I am bound. One favour I beg of you, which is, that if perchance you should again miscarry, you will return

hither, so that I may see you again before I die; then I shall be content to depart;' and Giannetto answered that he would do all things which to him seemed agreeable to Messer Ansaldo's wishes. Then Ansaldo gave him his blessing, and, having taken leave, they set sail on their voyage. The two friends who sailed with Giannetto kept good watch over his ship, while he thought of nothing else than how he might again drop into the harbour of Belmonte. Indeed, he gained over to his interests one of the steersmen so completely that he caused the vessel to be brought one night into the port of the lady's city. When in the morning the light grew clear, his two friends in the other two ships conferred and deliberated, and, since they saw nothing of Giannetto's ship, they said one to the other, 'In sooth, this is an evil turn for him,' and then they kept on their course, wondering greatly the while. When the vessel entered the port all the people of the

city ran to see her, and when they learned that it was Giannetto come once again they marvelled amain, saying, ' Certes, he must be the son of some great prince, seeing that he comes hither every year with such a fine ship and such great store of merchandise. Would to God that he were our ruler ! ' Then all the chief men and the barons and cavaliers of the land went to visit Giannetto, and word was carried to the lady how he was once more in the port. Whereupon she went to the window of the palace, and, as soon as she espied the fine vessel and the banner thereof, she made the sign of the holy cross and said, ' Of a surety this is a great day for me, for it is the same gentleman who has already brought such wealth into the land.' And she forthwith sent for Giannetto.

He repaired to her presence, and they embraced one another and exchanged greetings and reverence, and then the people set themselves to make merry all that day, and, for the love they had for

Giannetto, they held a stately jousting, many barons and cavaliers running a course. Giannetto also was minded to show his skill, and indeed he wrought such marvellous deeds, and showed such great prowess both with his arms and his horse, and won so completely the favour of the barons, that they all desired to have him to rule over them. And when evening had come, and it was time to retire, the lady took Giannetto by the hand and said, 'Let us go to bed.' When they came to the chamber door one of the lady's waiting-women, who had pity for Giannetto, put her lips close to his ear and said in a whisper, 'Make a show of drinking the wine, but taste it not.' Giannetto caught the meaning of her words, and entered the room with the lady, who said, 'I am sure you must be athirst; wherefore I will that you take a draught before you lie down to sleep.' Straightway came two damsels, who were as fair as angels, bearing wine and sweetmeats according to their

wont, and making ready the draught. Then said Giannetto, 'Who could refuse to drink with cupbearers so lovely as these?' The lady laughed, and Giannetto took the cup and feigned to drink therefrom, but he poured the wine down into his breast. The lady however believed that he had indeed drunk of the same, and said to herself, 'Thou wilt sail here again with another ship, for thou hast lost the one in the port.'

Giannetto got into bed and found himself with his wits clear and full of desire, and the time that sped before the lady came to his side seemed a thousand years. He said to himself, 'Certes, I have caught her this time, and she shall no longer have reason to think of me as a glutton and a toper.' And, in order to let her come the quicker to bed, he began to snore and to feign to be sleeping. When the lady saw this she said, 'All is well,' and quickly undressed herself and lay down beside Giannetto, who lost no time,

but, as soon as the lady was under the sheets, he turned and embraced her, saying, 'Now I have that which I have so long desired,' and with these words he gave her the greeting of holy matrimony, and all that night she lay in his arms; wherefore she was well content. The next morning she arose before dawn, and let summon all the barons and cavaliers and many of the citizens, and said to them, 'Giannetto is your lord; so let us make merry,' and at these words there went a shout through all the land, 'Long live our lord, Giannetto!' The bells and the musical instruments gave notice of the feast, and word was sent to divers barons and counts who dwelt far from the city bidding them come and see their ruler. There were merrymakings and feastings many and sumptuous, and when Giannetto came forth from the chamber they made him a cavalier and set him upon the throne, giving him a wand to hold in his hand, and pro-

claiming him lord with much state and rejoicing.

When all the barons and ladies of the land were come to court, Giannetto took to wife the lady with rejoicings and delights so great that they can neither be described nor imagined. For at this time all the barons and nobles of the country came to the feast, and there was no lack of merry jesting, and jousting, and sword-play, and dancing, and singing, and music, and all the other sports appertaining to jollity and rejoicing. Messer Giannetto, like a high-spirited gentleman, made presents of silken stuffs and of other rich wares which he had brought with him. He was a strong ruler, and made himself respected by the equal justice he maintained towards men of all classes. Thus he lived his life in joy and gladness, and gave no thought to Messer Ansaldo, who, luckless wight as he was, remained a living pledge for the ten thousand ducats which he had borrowed from the Jew.

One day Messer Giannetto, standing with his wife at the window of the palace, saw, passing through the piazza, a band of men bearing lighted torches in their hands, as if they were going to make some offering. Giannetto inquired of her what this might mean; where-upon she replied that it was a company of craftsmen going to pay their vows at the church of San Giovanni on the festival of the saint. Messer Giannetto then remembered Messer Ansaldo, and, having gone away from the window, he sighed deeply and became grave of countenance, and walked up and down the hall thinking over what he had just seen. The lady asked what ailed him, and he replied that nothing was amiss; but she began to question him, saying, 'Certes, you are troubled with something you are loth to tell me,' and she spake so much on the matter that at last Messer Giannetto told her how Messer Ansaldo was held in pledge for ten thousand ducats, and that the time

for repayment expired this very day. 'Wherefore,' he said, 'I am smitten with great sorrow that my father should have to die for me ; for unless his debt shall be repaid to-day, he is bound to have cut from his body a pound of flesh.' The lady said, Messere, mount your horse quickly, and travel thither by land, for you can travel more speedily thus than by sea. Take what following you wish, and a hundred thousand ducats to boot, and halt not till you shall be come to Venice. Then, if your father be still living, bring him back here with you.' Whereupon Giannetto let the trumpets sound forthwith ; and, having mounted with twenty companions and taken money enough, he set out for Venice.

When the time set forth in the bond had expired, the Jew caused Messer Ansaldo to be seized, and then he declared he meant to cut away from his debtor the pound of flesh. But Messer Ansaldo begged him to let him live a

few days longer, so that, in case Giannetto should return, he might at least see his son once more. The Jew replied that he was willing to grant this favour, so far as the respite was concerned, but that he was determined to have his pound of flesh according to his agreement, though a hundred Giannettos should come; and Messer Ansaldo declared that he was content. All the people of Venice were talking of this matter, everyone being grieved thereanent, and divers traders made a partnership together to pay the money, but the Jew would not take it, being minded rather to do this bloody deed, so that he might boast that he had slain the chief of the Christian merchants. Now it happened that, after Messer Giannetto set forth eagerly for Venice, his wife followed immediately behind him clad in legal garb and taking two servants with her.

When Messer Giannetto had come to Venice he went to the Jew's house, and, having joyfully embraced Messer An-

saldo, he next turned to the Jew, and said he was ready to pay the money that was due, and as much more as he cared to demand. But the Jew made answer that he wanted not the money, since it had not been paid in due time, but that he desired to cut his pound of flesh from Ansaldo. Over this matter there arose great debate, and everyone condemned the Jew; but, seeing that equitable law ruled in Venice, and that the Jew's contract was fully set forth and in customary legal form, no one could deny him his rights; all they could do was to entreat his mercy.

On this account all the Venetian merchants came there to entreat the Jew, but he grew harder than before, and then Messer Giannetto offered to give him twenty thousand, but he would not take them; then he advanced his offer to thirty, then to forty, then to fifty, and finally to a hundred thousand ducats. Then the Jew said, 'See how this thing stands! If you were to offer me more

ducats than the whole city of Venice is worth, I would not take them. I would rather have what this bond says is my due.' And while this dispute was going on there arrived in Venice the lady of Belmonte, clad as a doctor of laws. She took lodging at an inn, the host of which inquired of one of her servants who this gentleman might be. The servant, who had been instructed by the lady as to what reply he should make to a question of this sort, replied that his master was a doctor of laws who was returning home after a course of study at Bologna. The host when he heard this did them great-reverence, and while the doctor of laws sat at table he inquired of the host in what fashion the city of Venice was governed; whereupon the host replied, 'Messere, we make too much of justice here.' When the doctor inquired how this could be, the host went on to say, 'I will tell you how, Messere. Once there came hither from Florence a youth whose name was Giannetto. He came

to reside with his godfather, who was called Messer Ansaldo, and so gracious and courteous did he show himself to everyone, that all the ladies of Venice, and the gentlemen as well, held him very dear. Never before had there come to our city so seemly a youth. Now this godfather of his fitted out for him, on three different occasions, three ships, all of great value, and every time disaster befell his venture. But for the equipment of the last ship Messer Ansaldo had not money enough, so he had perforce to borrow ten thousand ducats of a certain Jew upon these terms, to wit, that if by the day of San Giovanni in the following June he should not have repaid the debt, the Jew aforesaid should be free to cut away, from whatever part of his body he would, a pound of flesh. Now this much-desired youth has returned from his last voyage, and, in lieu of the ten thousand ducats, has offered to give a hundred thousand, but this villainous Jew will not accept them ; so

all our excellent citizens are come hither to entreat him, but all their prayers profit nothing.' The doctor said, 'This is an easy question to settle.' Then cried the host, 'If you will only take the trouble to bring it to an end, without letting this good man die, you will win the love and gratitude of the most worthy young man that ever was born, and besides this the goodwill of every citizen of our state.'

After hearing these words of the host the doctor let publish a notice through all the state of Venice, setting forth how all those with any question of law to settle should repair to him. The report having come to the ears of Messer Giannetto that there was come from Bologna a doctor of laws who was ready to settle the rights and wrongs of every dispute, he went to the Jew and suggested that they should go before the doctor aforesaid, and the Jew agreed, saying at the same time that, come what might, he would demand the right to do

all that his bond allowed him. When they came before the doctor of laws, and gave him due salutation, he recognized Messer Giannetto, who meantime knew not the doctor to be his wife, because her face was stained with a certain herb. Messer Giannetto and the Jew spake their several pleas, and set the question fully in order before the doctor, who took up the bond and read it, and then said to the Jew, 'I desire that you now take these hundred thousand ducats, and let go free this good man, who will ever be bound to you by gratitude.' The Jew replied, 'I will do naught of this.' Whereupon the doctor persuaded him again thereto, saying it would be the better course for him, but the Jew would not consent. Then they agreed to go to the proper court for such affairs, and the doctor, speaking on behalf of Messer Ansaldo, said, 'Let the merchant be brought here,' and they fetched him forthwith, and the doctor said, 'Now take your pound of flesh where you will, and do your work.'

Then the Jew made Messer Ansaldo strip himself, and took in his hand a razor which he had brought for the purpose ; whereupon Messer Giannetto turned to the doctor and said, ' Messere, this is not the thing I begged you to do.' But the doctor bade him take heart, for the Jew had not yet cut off his pound of flesh. As the Jew approached, the doctor said, ' Take care what you do ; for, if you cut away more or less than a pound of flesh, you shall lose your own head ; and I tell you, moreover, that if you let flow a single drop of blood, you shall die, for the reason that your bond says naught as to the shedding of blood. It simply gives you the right to take a pound of flesh, and says neither less nor more. Now, if you are a wise man, you will consider well which may be the best way to compass this task.' Then the doctor bade them summon the executioner, and fetch likewise the axe and the block ; and he said to the Jew, ' As soon as I see the

first drop of blood flow, I will have your head stricken off.' Hereupon the Jew began to be afeared, and Messer Giannetto to take heart; and, after much fresh argument, the Jew said, 'Messer doctor, you have greater wit in these affairs than I have; so now give me those hundred thousand ducats, and I will be satisfied.' But the doctor replied that he might take his pound of flesh, as his bond said, for he should not be allowed a single piece of money now; he should have taken it when it was offered to him. Then the Jew came to ninety, and then to eighty thousand, but the doctor stood firmer than ever to his word. Messer Giannetto spake to the doctor, saying, 'Give him what he asks, so that he lets Messer Ansaldo go free.' But the doctor replied that the settlement of the question had better be left to himself. The Jew now cried out that he would take fifty thousand; but the doctor answered, 'I would not give you the meanest coin you ever

had in your pouch.' The Jew went on, 'Give me at least the ten thousand ducats that are my own, and cursed be heaven and earth!' Then said the doctor, 'Do you not understand that you will get nothing at all? If you are minded to take what is yours, take it; if not, I will protest, and cause your bond to be annulled.'

At these words all those who were assembled rejoiced exceedingly, and began to put flouts and jests upon the Jew, saying, 'This fellow thought to play a trick, and see he is tricked himself.' Then the Jew, seeing that he could not have his will, took his bonds and cut them in pieces in his rage; whereupon Messer Ansaldo was at once set free and led with the greatest rejoicing to Messer Giannetto's house. Next Giannetto took the hundred thousand ducats and went to the doctor, whom he found in his chamber making ready to depart, and said, 'Messere, you have done me the greatest service I have ever known,

and for this reason I would that you take with you this money, which, certes, you have well earned.' The doctor replied, 'Messer Giannetto, I thank you heartily; but as I have no need of the money, keep it yourself, so that your wife may not charge you with wasting your substance.' Messer Giannetto answered, 'By my faith, she is so generous and kindly and good, that, even were I to lavish four times the money I have here, she would not complain; in sooth, she was fain that I should take with me a much greater sum than this.' The doctor inquired whether Giannetto were contented with this wife of his, and Giannetto replied, 'There is no one God ever made who is so dear to me as she is; she is so prudent and so fair that nature could not possibly excel her. Now, if you will do me the favour to come and visit me, and see her, I trow you will be amazed at the honourable reception she will give you, and you can see for yourself whether or not she is all

that I now tell you.' The doctor of laws replied, 'I cannot visit you as you desire, seeing that I have other business in hand; but, since you tell me that your wife is so virtuous a lady, salute her on my behalf when you see her.' Messer Giannetto declared that he would not fail to do this, but he still urged the doctor to accept the money as a gift.

While they were thus debating the doctor espied upon Messer Giannetto's hand a ring, and said, 'I would fain have that ring of yours, but money of any sort I will not take.' Messer Giannetto answered, 'It shall be as you wish, but I give you this ring somewhat unwillingly, for my wife gave me the same, saying that I must always keep it out of love for her. Now, were she to see me without the ring, she would deem that I had given it to some other woman, and would be wroth with me, and believe I had fallen in love elsewhere, but in sooth I love her better than I love myself.' The doctor replied, 'Certes, if

she love you as much as you say, she will believe you when you tell her that you gave it to me. But perchance you want to give it to some old sweetheart of yours here in Venice.' Messer Giannetto answered, 'So great are the love and the trust I have for her, that there is not a lady in the world for whom I would exchange her, so consummately fair is she in every sense,' and with these words he drew from his finger the ring, which he gave to the doctor, and they embraced each other, saluting with due respect. The doctor asked Messer Giannetto if he would grant him a favour, and being answered in the affirmative, he went on to say, 'I would that you tarry not here, but go straightway home to your wife.' Messer Giannetto declared that the time yet to elapse before meeting her would be as long to him as a thousand years, and in this wise they took leave of one another.

The doctor embarked and went his way, while Messer Giannetto let cele-

brate divers banquets, and gave horses and money to his companions, and the merrymaking went on for several days. He kept open house, and at last he bade farewell to the Venetians, and took Messer Ansaldo with him, many of his old friends accompanying them on their voyage. Well nigh all the gentlemen and the ladies shed tears over his departure, so gracious had been his carriage with everyone what time he had abode in Venice, and thus he departed and returned to Belmonte. It happened that his wife had come there some days before, having given out that she had been away at the baths, and had once more put on woman's garb. Now she prepared great feastings, and hung all the streets with silk, and bade divers companies of men-at-arms array themselves; so when Messer Giannetto and Messer Ansaldo arrived all the barons and the courtiers met them, crying out, 'Long live our lord!' When they had landed the lady ran to embrace Messer

Ansaldo, but with Messer Giannetto she seemed somewhat angered, albeit she held him dearer than her own self. And they made high festival with jousting, and sword-play, and dancing, and singing, in which all the barons and ladies present at the court took part.


When Messer Giannetto perceived that his wife did not welcome him with that good humour which was her wont, he went into the chamber, and, having called her, asked her what was amiss, and offered to embrace her ; but she said, ‘ I want no caresses of yours, for I am well assured that you have met some old sweetheart of yours at Venice.’ Messer Giannetto began to protest ; whereupon the lady cried, ‘ Where is the ring I gave you ? ’ Messer Giannetto answered, ‘ That which I thought would happen has indeed come to pass, for I said you must needs think evil of what I did ; but I swear to you, by the faith I have in God and in yourself, that I gave the ring to that doctor of laws who

helped me win the suit against the Jew.' The lady said, 'And I swear to you, by the faith I have in God and in you, that you gave it to a woman. I am sure of this, and you are not ashamed to swear as you have sworn.' Messer Giannetto went on, 'I pray that God may strike me dead if I do not speak the truth; moreover, I spake as I told you to the doctor when he begged the ring of me.' The lady replied, 'You had better abide henceforth in Venice, and leave Messer Ansaldo here, while you take your pleasure with your wantons; in sooth, I hear they all wept when you left them.' Messer Giannetto burst into tears, and, greatly troubled, cried out, 'You swear to what is not and cannot be true;' whereupon the lady, perceiving from his tears that she had struck a knife into his heart, quickly ran to him and embraced him, laughing heartily the while. She showed him the ring, and told him everything: what he had said to the doctor of laws; how she herself was

that same doctor, and in what wise he had given her the ring. Thereupon Messer Giannetto was mightily astonished; and, when he saw that it was all true, he made merry thereanent. When he went forth from the chamber he told the story to all the barons and to his friends about the court, and from this adventure the love between this pair became greater than ever. And afterwards Messer Giannetto let summon that same waiting-woman who had counselled him not to drink the wine, and gave her in marriage to Messer Ansaldo, and they all lived together in joy and feasting as long as their lives lasted."

NOVEL II

Count Aldobrandino, a man advanced in years, in order to get to wife the daughter of Carsibaldo, induces her father to proclaim a tournament, with the damsel as the first prize thereof. How he proved the victor in the same and won the lady.

HEN Saturnina's novel had come to an end, Frate Aurette began and said, "Certes, your story is one of the finest I ever listened to, and it may well be adjudged the prize as the best that has yet been told. Nevertheless, I would fain tell you one of my own, which perchance may please you, albeit my power of invention and narrative falls greatly short of yours.

Not a great time ago there dwelt in Provence a gentleman who was lord of several villages, and called by name Carsivalo. He was worthy, and of good understanding, and held in much affec-

tion and honour by the other lords and barons of the country, for the reason that he was of old and noble lineage, being descended from the house of Balzo in Provence. He had one daughter, whose name was Lisetta, and she was the fairest and most excellent lady in the whole of Provence. Many lords and counts and barons sought to win her in marriage, all of whom were young and gallant and goodly in person ; but Carsivalo said them all nay, and was not minded to give his daughter to any one of them. It happened that there dwelt in the country a certain count, who was the lord of Venisi and of all its towns and villages, named Count Aldobrandino. He was an old man, more than seventy years of age, blessed with neither wife nor child, and so rich withal that his purse seemed to have no bottom. Now when Count Aldobrandino heard of the beauty of Carsivalo's daughter, he became enamoured of her, and desired greatly to have her to wife, but he

was kept back by bashfulness from asking for her, because he was an old man, and because he knew that so many mettlesome youths had besought her without success. Nevertheless, he was consumed with the desire to possess her, but could find no method of compassing his end.

One day he let prepare an entertainment, and it happened by chance that Carsivalo, as his friend and loyal follower, went to the feast to pay his respects. The count received him with much honour, bestowing upon him horses and hawks and hounds, and many things beside, and likewise determined in friendly fashion to ask of him his daughter; and one day, when they were in a room together, the count began with very gracious speech and said, ‘ My Carsivalo, I will tell you what I have in my mind without any prelude, for I deem that to you I may speak whatsoever I will. Let it be understood that there is one matter over which I am somewhat

abashed, and one only, what though I have often observed that the leek, which lives underground, waxes and decays as regards its outward stalk, and always keeps green itself. But, be this as it may, I now declare to you that, with your good pleasure, I am fain to have your daughter to wife.' Carsivalo answered, 'In good faith, my lord, I would willingly give her to you, but it might prove a source of great trouble to me, considering how many suitors have already sought her, all of them young men of eighteen or twenty, for all of these might become your enemies. And then her mother and her brothers and my other kinsfolk might be ill content, and perhaps the damsel herself might not approve of you, seeing that she has had her choice of others of fresher age.' The count answered, 'My Carsivalo, you speak truly, but you may tell her that she shall be the mistress of everything I have in the world, inasmuch as I desire that you and I together may find

a way of success.' The other replied, 'I am well content; but let us think the matter over to-night, and to-morrow let us exchange our views.' And so it was settled.

The count slept not at all that night, but he devised a most excellent scheme for the furtherance of his design, and, when it was morning, he called his guest and said, 'I have hit upon a plan which will supply you with a capital pretext, and at the same time do you honour.' Carsivalo inquired what this plan might be, and the count replied, 'You must proclaim a tournament, and send word to all such as would have your daughter to wife, to come thither on a certain day; then he who may be adjudged conqueror shall win her hand. Leave all else to me, for I will contrive to be the winner by a method which will gain the approval of all men.' Carsivalo answered that he was satisfied, and then departed and went home; and, when he came there, he called his wife and others

of his friends and kinsfolk, and said, 'It would seem now to be full time to marry Lisetta. What plan would you adopt, taking due account of the many suitors who have come here, all of whom are our friends and neighbours? If we do not give her to this or that, but to the other, the rejected ones will become our foes because of wrath, and will say, "Are we not as good as he?" So in lieu of gaining friends we should make enemies. Wherefore it seems fitting that we should proclaim this spring a tournament, at which whosoever shall be the conqueror shall win our daughter and good luck with her.' The mother and all the rest answered that they were well satisfied with this suggestion, which was duly carried out.

Carsivalo let notice of the tournament be published abroad, proclaiming that anyone who might wish to have his daughter to wife should repair on the calends of May to a jousting match to be holden at the city of Marseilles, and

that the conqueror therein should win his daughter also. When he heard this the Count Aldobrandino sent to the King of France, begging the services of the boldest squire of arms in the country. The king, bearing in mind that the count had always been a faithful vassal of the crown, and was even akin to him, sent to him a certain squire whom he had trained from childhood, Ricciardo by name, and a scion of the family of Mont Albano, formerly a noble and a valiant house. Him the king commanded to do whatsoever the Count Aldobrandino might require. When this youth arrived the count gave him honourable reception, and then told him the whole story, and why he had sent for him. Ricciardo said, 'I received a command from the king to do whatsoever you might bid me; wherefore give your orders, and I will carry them out in gallant fashion.' The count went on, 'I have let prepare in Marseilles a tournament in which I am minded that you

should be the victor. Afterwards I will take the field and fight with you, when you must suffer me to overthrow you. Then I shall be adjudged the conqueror of the jousts.' Ricciardo replied that he was ready to assent to this; wherefore the count kept him hidden until the day of the tournament, and then he told him to take what arms he liked and go to Marseilles, and make pretence of being a knight errant with money and horses to his taste, and a man of valour to boot. Ricciardo bade the count leave all this to him, and, having gone to the stables, he beheld amongst the other horses a certain one which had not been ridden for several months past. This he mounted at once, and chose certain followers according to his liking, and then set out for Marseilles, where they were making mighty preparations for the tournament ensuing.

Many young gallants were assembled for the jousting, and fortunate was he who was able to make the most seemly

and honourable appearance there. With the sound of trumpets and pipes, it seemed as if the whole world were full of music. A large space was enclosed with palisades to serve as the tilting-ground, with many balconies round about, where lords and ladies and damsels took their station to behold the spectacle. On the calends of May there came that gracious damsel, Lisetta by name, who shone amongst the others like a sun, so fair and seemly was her carriage in every way ; and likewise all those who were fain to have her to wife came to the tournament with guise and devices of various kinds, and dealt one another the shrewdest blows. Ricciardo also was there, mounted on his charger, and he made every jousting give way to him. The tournament lasted nearly all day, and in every course Ricciardo was the victor, seeing that he was better versed in the use of arms than any of the others, attacking with spirit, defending himself skilfully, and turning rap-

idly like one accustomed to such sport. Wherefore men asked each other who this might be, and the word went round that he was an outlander who had come to the jousting. Thus he remained the master of the field, for all the others were overthrown, and left the ground, some this way and some that, not being able to stand against his doughty blows.

But in a short time Count Aldobrandino entered the field fully armed, and sounded his challenge and fell upon Ricciardo, who returned his assault. After exchanging divers strokes Ricciardo, as he had agreed, suffered himself to be beaten down, and made no more fight, what though he was ill content with his part, seeing that he, too, had fallen in love with Lisetta; but he was forced to observe the bidding of the king, and bound likewise to do what Count Aldobrandino wished. After the count had gained the final victory, and had ridden round the lists sword in hand, all his squires and barons went to meet him

with great rejoicing; and when he removed his helmet and disclosed his face, all present marvelled greatly, and the lady Lisetta especially. And in this wise he won to wife the daughter of Carsivalo, and took her home with great joy and merrymaking. After this Ricciardo returned to France, and when the king asked him how he had fared, he answered, 'Sacred Majesty, I come from a tournament at which this count of yours played me a very scurvy trick.' The king asked how, and Ricciardo went on to tell how the count had made him a go-between, and described all that had happened, whereat the king marvelled greatly. But Ricciardo said, 'My lord, wonder not at what has come to pass; wonder rather that I should have acted such a part, for in sooth I never before did any deed which caused me so great grief as this, so incomparably fair is the lady whom Count Aldobrandino has won by his crafty scheming.' The king, when he heard the story, was silent a

little space, and then said, 'Keep a good heart, Ricciardo; for this tournament shall prove to be your making. Be satisfied with this.'

Shortly afterwards it happened that Count Aldobrandino died without offspring; whereupon Madonna Lisetta being left a widow, her father took her back to his house, but he gave her neither word nor caress according to his wont. For this cause the young lady began to marvel amain in her mind, and when at last she could endure no longer, she said to her father one day, 'Father, I wonder much at your treatment of me, considering that I was at one time as dear to you as the eye in your head, and that you held me in greater love than any of your other children. Moreover, whenever you chanced to behold me you rejoiced at heart, that is, while I was a maid. But now, for some reason I know not, it seems that you cannot bear the sight of me.' Her father answered, 'There is less reason for you to wonder

at me, than for me to wonder at you ; because I always deemed you were of good understanding, seeing clearly the reason and design I had in marrying you to your husband, to wit, that you might have children, and remain after his death the mistress of all his wealth. For this reason I compassed your marriage, and for no other.’ The daughter answered, ‘ I did all that lay in my power.’ Her father said, ‘ How was it that there was not in the household some cavalier or knight or varlet by whom this business might have been done?’ Whereto the daughter answered, ‘ Father, trouble not yourself over this ; for I can assure you that there is no cavalier or knight or varlet in the house to whom I have not spoken thereanent, but no one would believe me.’ When the father heard this witty reply, he laughed and said, ‘ I am quite satisfied, and I promise to give you so feat a husband that you shall be put to no trouble in seeking service from any other but him, and leave all to me.’

It chanced that the whole of the estate of Count Aldobrandino devolved upon the King of France, who, calling to mind the prowess and the knightly courtesy which Ricciardo had displayed, sent at once word into Provence that it was his pleasure that Carsivalo should give his daughter in marriage to a certain squire of his own, who ought in all reason to be her husband. Carsivalo forthwith understood the meaning of this, and sent answer that he would do whatsoever the king might please to command. Whereupon the king, having taken horse with a great following of barons, travelled into Provence, taking with him Ricciardo, whom he mated with Lisetta, so that she became his wife. Next he created Ricciardo a count, granting to him all the heritage of Aldobrandino; and this match gave pleasure to all those round about, and especially to Ricciardo. Moreover, there was no longer any particle of need for the countess to go seeking the good offices of squires and

varlets, seeing that both she and Riccardo were young and vigorous and well set for sprightly diversion. Wherefore they lived many years together in happiness and jollity."

When the novel was finished Saturnina said, "As it is now my turn to speak, I will sing you a canzonet, which I trow you will understand from the words thereof better than by any saying or picture of mine." And she sang in this wise :

Dearer than life art thou, yet shall I find
Grace in thy sight, thou flower of womankind ?

When the love-kindling fire darts from thine eyes,
And droops my heart as droops the sun-smit
flower,
And I no place can find to spend my sighs,
Then of thy radiant glance I feel the power
Within my heart, like to the snow-flake shower,
Like manna sweet borne on the balmy wind.

Dost thou forget, with what desire intense
I ever brought thee faith and loyalty,
Hoping to find in thee some recompense,
And gave my heart and soul alike to thee ?
This thou, with thy clear wisdom, sure wilt see ;
I'll rate thee ill, unless thy words be kind.

Well dost thou know the balm of ecstasy
Thy voice can bring my weary soul unto.
When thou, without reserve, shalt whisper me,
“Sir, I will take thee for my lover true.”
Therefore forget not, lady, to renew
The contract which thy heart and eyes have signed.

Such faith I have kept, and with thee still keep,
Which every loyal heart is bound to hold.
For now I trow my guerdon I shall reap,
What time thy loving arms shall me enfold,
But more such pain to bear I am not bold,
Unless thy favour be to me inclined.

Go, little song, to her who keeps my heart,
The queen unquestioned of my soul and fate,
And bid my lady, on her servant's part,
To let her kindness on her suppliant wait,
And show some pity on his woeful state,
For to her yoke he is, and will be aye resigned.

When the canzonet had come to an
end the lovers clasped hands, declaring
mutually that these meetings were the
great delight and solace of their lives,
by reason of the sweet and pleasant dis-
course which they held one with the
other. Then they bade farewell and
departed.

The Fifth Day.



The Fifth Day.

NOVEL I.

Chello and Janni of Velletri feign to be soothsayers, in order to cast shame upon the Roman people. They are received by Crassus at the state palace, and they dig up for him certain pieces of money which they had hidden in divers places. They next declare that under the tower of the palace of the tribunes is hidden a vast treasure. Crassus causes the same to be mined and underpinned; and the soothsayers kindle a fire there. Then they quit Rome, and the next morning the tower falls, with great slaughter of the Roman people.



WHEN on the fifth day the two lovers returned to their wonted place of meeting, Frate Aurette began and said, "As it is my turn to discourse, I am minded that we should cease telling

of love, and concern ourselves for a little with themes dealing rather with manners and history. These things, indeed, are better worth narrating and more profitable; wherefore I will tell you a story of Rome, which is this.

In the city of Rome there lived formerly a very noble citizen, Crassus by name, who, according to the account given in Titus Livius his history, was the most avaricious man the world ever saw, forasmuch as there was nothing he would not have done or sanctioned for the sake of money. It happened that during a quarrel which had continued for many years with discord and bloodshed between the Romans and the people of Velletri, a place some fifteen miles distant, two men of Velletri resolved to set to work to bring shame and injury upon the Roman people. First they let assemble the council of Velletri, and announced how they were ready to work great loss and disgrace to the Romans, but they asked to have handed over to

them fifty thousand florins, declaring that, should they not accomplish their task, they would pay back a hundred thousand; whereupon the council of Velletri resolved to give these men what they demanded. The fifty thousand florins were given to them, with the request that they should go and let their deeds match their valorous promises.

Then these two adventurers, whose names were Chello and Janni, took the money, and, having embarked on the sea, went to Pisa, where they bought four horses and clothed themselves in strange garments. Moreover, by letting their beards grow and staining their faces with herbs, they altered their seeming so greatly that no one would have known them. Having hired two servants and instructed them to answer, should anyone demand to know who their employers might be, that they were soothsayers from a foreign land, they went on to Rome. They did not draw rein till they reached the city, and

they secretly buried in certain places outside the walls much of their money, six thousand florins in one place, ten in another, and twenty in another, each portion being enclosed in vessels of copper, made in ancient fashion. Then they began to show themselves about the house of Crassus. And when the people saw the strange garb and the seemly carriage of the two, they asked the servants many a time who they might be, whereupon these replied that their masters were soothsayers, come to Rome from a foreign country. When Crassus came to know that two soothsayers had arrived at his court, he sent for them straightway, and demanded of them whence they came, and what was their object in visiting Rome. They replied, 'We are diviners from Toletto, and we can find treasure that is buried in the ground. Now, because we know that much money must have been buried at Rome by the rich men of old days, we desired to come hither, and also to

look upon your magnificence.' Then Crassus said to himself, 'These are indeed men who can give me to the full the thing I desire;' and then he gave orders that they should be treated with great honour, and let them know that he would soon be fain to see some sample of their art. He assigned to them lodging likewise, and caused them oftentimes to be bidden to his table.

It came to pass on a certain night, when they deemed the time was fitting, that they called upon Crassus, and, having pointed out to him a star, said, 'We perceive, by the power of that star, that right under your feet is buried a great sum of money.' Crassus was mightily pleased at these words, and demanded to know how he might lay hands on this treasure; whereupon the others answered that he had better leave the business to them; all they wanted was the help of the most trusted servants he had, and Crassus agreed to what they proposed. They then took their way

out of the city to the spot where they had buried the six thousand florins, and when they came anear thereto they bade retire all the servants, and began to make show to measure and to adjust the position of the stars with geometry and arithmetical reckoning, and divers acts and signs. After this had gone on for a little, they commanded the servants to dig, and they in digging found the metal pot which held the money aforesaid. They went back forthwith to Crassus and gave him the money ; whereupon he was greatly astonished, and demanded to know from his servants how this thing had come about, and the servants related to him all the methods the men had employed. Then Crassus said, ‘ Certes, these be the men I am seeking,’ and he let them come to his table, and showed them great respect. The two men spake little and held aloof, and when the next opportunity offered itself they did what they had done before, and said to Crassus, ‘ My lord, a planet has just ap-

peared, with which there is a star, which points to a spot where is buried a quantity of treasure; wherefore we would fain go thither.' After torches had been lighted, Crassus sent with them certain of his servants; and they went to the great palace, which was in ruins, and there they made the same signs and motions, and bade the servants dig. They soon came upon the ten thousand florins, and, having hurried back to Crassus, gave him the money.

It seemed to Crassus that this feat was indeed a mighty one, and he said to himself, 'These diviners will make me the richest man in the world;' and he put full faith in them. Again, when the time seemed ripe, they went and dealt in the same fashion with the fifteen thousand florins which they had deposited in another place. Crassus, when this last-named thing had come about, was the happiest man in the world. There stood upon the Capitol a tower called the tower of the tribunes, on the outside of

which were cut in metal the names of all those who had ever won glory or fame, and this tower was deemed the noblest thing in the city. Now these sooth-sayers laid a scheme to bring this tower to the ground, and one day they said to Crassus, 'My lord, we perceive that a vast sum of treasure lies under the tower of the tribunes.' Crassus answered, 'Well, and can you find means to get it out?' They replied, 'You know it can be excavated by skilful artificers, and props put in on both sides. When this has been done we can dig out the treasure that is there; then you can lay the foundations afresh.' Crassus sent straightway for two skilled artificers, and sought their advice in this business, and they gave answer that the tower could be excavated on two sides and underpinned, and a new foundation put in afterwards. Then Crassus caused the excavation to be made, and the tower to be underpinned; and, that the thing might be kept secret, he built around

the tower a wooden fence secured by lock and key. When this was done he gave the key to the two soothsayers, who remained on the spot with the artificers while they secretly excavated the foundations and underpinned the tower.

As soon as the excavation was finished, the two men, who had the key of the pit, conveyed therein, when they found opportunity, a great quantity of tow, which they placed around the wood used for underpinning, and prepared a fire with sulphur and tinder; but they contrived that the tower should not fall before morning, in order that they might by that time have got some good distance from Rome. And as soon as they had set all in order according to their design, they kindled a fire, and, having fastened and sealed the entrance, they mounted two swift horses and returned to Velletri.

The next day it happened that a great multitude of people were assembled in the Capitol, as it was market-day, and

just at half-past nine in the morning the tower aforesaid fell to the earth, killing several hundred people in its ruin. Indeed, as far as Velletri the noise could be heard, and the cloud of dust could be seen. Thereupon the people of Velletri rejoiced amain, and afterwards sent letters to Rome, telling what they had done, and how by means of the money they had ruined the most stately possession in Rome. When the Romans were informed of this, they rushed full of rage to the palace of Crassus, and with one accord fell on him and slew him."

NOVEL II.

Janni and Ciucolo betake themselves to Boethius for advice : the one because he found himself with nothing in his pocket at the end of the year, and the other because he had a cross-grained wife. The answer made to them by Boethius.

WHEN the foregoing tale was finished Saturnina began and said, "I have been mightily pleased in sooth by the story you have told me ; wherefore I also will tell one the scene of which as you will see is also laid in Rome. I am sure you will be diverted with it, forasmuch as I perceive you are grown weary of the theme of love. Moreover, it is seemly now and then to vary the fashion of our entertainment, since one thing may please this, and another that person ; so I will now begin my tale.

There lived in Rome two men who were close friends, the one named Janni

and the other Ciucolo. They were rich and well-to-do in this world's goods, keeping each other company day and night, and holding each other dearer than brothers. Both lived in seemly fashion, and passed the time pleasantly, being of gentle birth and Roman knights. On a certain day, when they were together, one said to the other, 'Has it happened to you as to me?' and the one addressed replied, 'What do you mean?' The first said, 'What if I tell you that I have used such bad economy with my affairs that at the new year I found myself with nothing but debts.' His friend answered, 'By faith, I have at home the most cross-grained woman for a wife there is in all the world; in sooth, she is rather devil than woman. Do what I may to gratify her, I cannot make life with her possible, so malicious and ill-tempered is she. Night and morning there is scolding and contention, vastly more than I desire; wherefore I cannot manage to keep company with her

longer.' Then said Janni, 'I propose that we should seek advice about our affairs — I of mine, and you of yours.' Whereupon Ciucolo agreed to this, and they betook themselves to a worthy gentleman named Boethius.

When they came before him Janni began, 'Signor, we are come to you for advice. As to myself, I work my farms all the year and always find myself in debt, notwithstanding the income I enjoy, which thing puzzles me greatly.' Ciucolo said, 'And I have to wife the most cross-grained and spiteful woman in the world.' Then Boethius said to Janni, 'Rise betimes in the morning,' and to Ciucolo, 'Go to the bridge of Sant Agnolo, and God be with you!' The two friends were hugely astonished, and said one to the other, 'This fellow is a stupid fool; what does he mean by this speech of his? When I tell him about my stock and chattels, he bids me get up early, and he tells you to go to the bridge of Sant Agnolo;' and they

departed, jeering at Boethius. But one morning Janni did rise early, and hid himself behind the door ; and after a little he espied one of his servants carrying down a huge jar of oil, and then another with a large piece of dried meat. On account of what he saw he watched again and again ; and this time it was the women-servants, and the next the serving-woman ; one took grain, and one took flour ; this took one thing, and that another ; wherefore he said to himself, ' Small wonder that I find myself penniless at the end of the year.' Then he called his man-servant and said to him, ' Get you gone, and let me see you no more in this house.' Next he sent for his women-servants and the waiting-maid, and said the like to them, sending away the whole band, and engaging new servants. He began to have a care to his business, and at the end of the year he found himself in funds, just the same as he had heretofore been lacking.

One day he met his friend and told

him what he had gained by early rising; whereupon Ciucolo said, ‘ And, certes, I was minded to make trial of the counsel Boethius gave me, and the other day I went to the bridge of Sant Agnolo, and there I waited, having seated myself. It chanced that a carrier with divers laden mules went by, when one of the beasts shied and refused to go on ; whereupon the carrier seized the mule by the harness in order to make it move on to the bridge, but this he could not do because the harder he pulled it forward the more the mule hung back. The carrier began to be enraged and to beat the mule, which hung back worse than ever ; and when he had had enough of this he took the stick which he used in tying his bales, and beat the mule on belly, back, and ribs, venting all his rage upon the beast. In a very short time he broke the stick over its back ; whereupon the mule became tractable and crossed the bridge, and the carrier made it go backwards and forwards several times. As

soon as the fellow saw that the mule was freed of this untoward humour, he went about his business.'

When Ciucolo saw how the carrier had dealt with his mule, he went his way, saying to himself, 'Now I know what it behoves me to do ;' and in this mood he hurried back to his house ; and his wife, as soon as he entered, began to scold and to heap abuse upon him, and to ask wherefore he had been so long away. The husband let her go on, keeping perfectly quiet, while she let her rage still boil. Then he said to her, 'Hold your peace, or you will get what you will not like.' 'Hoity toity !' cried the wife. 'Have you plucked up courage enough to lay hands on me? You would rue the day in sooth when you did that.' The husband replied, 'Take care how you provoke me, or you may smart for it.' The woman said, 'If I thought that a single hair of your body harboured such a thought I would send to my brothers, who would give you

such a handling that you would not laugh again in a hurry ; and again, cannot you see what would happen to you in consequence of what you have said to me ?' The husband cried, ' You are a fiend indeed ! ' and then he got up and beat her soundly, while she bawled out and made a great uproar. Then he caught up a stick and chased her round the house, giving it to her soundly again and again over the shoulders and arms and head, and when the stick was broken he took another. At last she began to cry mercy, whereupon he beat her harder than ever, crying out, ' In faith, I have a great mind to kill you.' Then the wife, perceiving what her husband's mood was, and feeling herself bruised all over, fell on her knees and cried, ' Husband, husband ! give over beating me, and you will never find me ill-tempered again.'

Thereupon the husband, to expel entirely the angry humour from her brain, made her trot round the room several times, holding over her the while the for-

midable stick. And the business came to such a happy issue that the wife took thought of only such things as would please her husband, and became the most gentle and submissive wife in the whole of Rome. In this fashion Ciucolo drove the ill-humour out of his wife's head, and whereas up to this time he had known nothing but discord and ill-fortune with his wife, for the future they lived in harmony and love. Now if any man should be tied to a cross-grained wife, let him take pattern from Ciucolo, as he took it from the carrier."

The story being finished, Frate Aurette said, "The cure of Ciucolo worked well, and assuredly it is one of the best there is in the world for a man to employ who may have a scolding wife. But as it is my turn to sing a canzonet, I will sing it forthwith in order to acquit myself of my debt."

Dear Lord of love, bend thy delightful bow,
And let her taste the torments that I know,

Now I beseech thee in thy mercy heal
The wounds which she my inmost heart has
dealt ;
Now let her all thy power and lordship feel,
And may she mourn the dole that Dido felt,
That flame in which by day, by night, I melt.
Pity, oh, pity, Lord, on me bestow !

O heart of marble, diamond, or stone !
O woman who wouldst wear the serpent's mien !
Now goest thou deaf and shamed, with head cast
down,
For that thy cruelty thy bane hath been.
I would that thou the light hadst never seen,
And that thy heart should feel my bitter woe.

If thou the blossom of thy days let fade
Without the pricking of love's pleasant pain,
Nor let thy debt of favour be repaid
To me, thy slave, whilst thou of youth art fain,
The passing days shall bring revenge amain,
And I shall see if thou art kind or no.

My song, if thou be wise thy tale to tell,
I soon shall know if I shall favour find.
But creep into her heart, and house thee well.
Ah me ! couldst thou but say if she be kind,
If she to ease my sorrow be inclined,
And solace on my longing vain bestow.

As soon as this love-song was finished the two lovers took each other by the hand and gave mutual thanks. Then they bade farewell with gracious reverences, and each one went happily away.

The Sixth Day.



The Sixth Day.

NOVEL I.

Messer Alano, a learned doctor of Paris, went to the court of Rome and took up his residence in a convent of monks as a servant. It chanced that the Pope convoked a consistory to refute the subtleties of Messer Giovan Piero, another doctor of Paris, and a noted heretic; whereupon Messer Alano, having entered the chamber under the abbot's cope, took part in the dispute. How he made himself known there, and how he confounded the opposing doctor.



WHEN, on the sixth day, the two lovers returned to their accustomed meeting-place, Saturnina began to speak merrily and said, "Since I am bound to act the story-teller to-day, I will

tell you a tale which I think will please you.

Not long ago there lived in Paris two distinguished and worthy men, doctors of the two great faculties of the law, the one called Messer Alano, the other Messer Giovan Piero ; and in sooth the whole of Christendom in those days did not hold two men of greater distinction than these. They were always on ill terms one with the other, but Messer Alano always prevailed in argument, seeing that he was the finest rhetorician in the world and had a better understanding than Messer Giovan Piero, who, moreover, was a heretic, and would often have brought confusion upon the faith had it not been for Messer Alano, who came to the rescue thereof and replied to all Messer Giovan Piero's contentions. And it came to pass in the course of time that Messer Alano was minded to go to Rome to see the sacred relics, and the Holy Father and his court ; wherefore, having set out from his home

with divers attendants and well equipped, he went to Rome. He saw the Pope and his court, and how it was ruled, and was greatly astonished at what he beheld, for he had deemed that the court of Rome must needs be the foundation of the faith and the prop of Christianity, but he found it to be the most infamous and full of simony. For this reason he left the city, and resolved to have done with worldly life and to devote himself to God's service.

When he had departed from Rome and was journeying with his servants, he said to them as they were passing near to San Chirico di Rosena, 'Go in advance and secure lodging at the inn, and leave me to follow at leisure.' The servants went on to San Chirico, and as soon as Messer Alano saw that they were out of sight he left the road and kept his way towards the mountains, and at the end of his day's journey halted for the night at a shepherd's hut. Messer Alano dismounted and lay there the

night, and in the morning said to the shepherd, 'I would fain leave with you my clothes and this horse, and that you should give me your raiment in exchange.' The shepherd, deeming that his guest was jesting, said, 'Messere, I have given you the best cheer I could; I pray you will not make game of me.' But Messer Alano stripped off his clothes, and made the shepherd do the like. Then he handed over his horse and all he had, and, having taken the shepherd's flask and garments and shoes, he set forth at a venture. His servants, when they had waited long for his return, began to search for him in vain; wherefore they believed, the roads being there somewhat unsafe, that he had been robbed and murdered, and, having sought him for some days, they departed and returned to Paris.

Meantime, Messer Alano, having left the shepherd, reached that evening an abbey in Maremma, and upon his begging bread in God's name, the abbot

asked if he was minded to tarry with the other monks. He replied that he was ; whereupon the abbot inquired what he could do. Messer Alano answered, 'Signor, I shall be able to do whatsoever you may teach me.' It seemed to the abbot that this was a good fellow, so he took him in and set him to fetch wood. The new-comer bore himself so well that all the inmates of the monastery liked him, because he did willingly as he was bid. He did not cry out that shame was put upon him, or feign that he was aweary, but he lent a hand to whatever task there was to do. When the abbot saw his tractable nature he made him the overseer of the monastery, not knowing who he was, and gave him the name of Benedetto. The rule of his life was to fast entirely four days in every week ; he never undressed, but passed the greater part of every night in prayer. He was never wroth anent anything which might be said or done to him, but praised Christ without ceasing. He set

his mind on serving God in this wise; wherefore the abbot gave him all his goodwill and held him very dear.

It happened that when his servants returned to Paris, and brought word that Messer Alano was dead, all the men of worth and worship raised great lamentation, deeming that they had lost the most illustrious teacher in all the world. But as soon as Messer Giovan Piero knew that Messer Alano was dead, his spirits rose mightily, and he said, 'To-day I can do that which I have so long desired to do.' Then he set his affairs in order, and went to Rome; and, having arrived there, he proposed in consistory a question greatly inimical to our faith, desiring and striving to bring heresies into the Church by his subtle arguments. On this account the Pope let summon the cardinals, who determined to send for all the illustrious scholars of Italy to a consistory, which the Pope was minded to hold in order to refute the contentions against the faith

which Messer Giovan Piero had advanced. And then all the bishops and the abbots, and the other chief prelates, who had been summoned by decree, were cited to come into the court, and with the rest came that same abbot with whom Messer Alano had taken service. When the abbot had prepared for his journey to Rome it chanced that Messer Alano heard whither he was bound, whereupon he begged the abbot of his kindness to take him also. Then said the abbot, 'What would you do there, you who know not how to read? There you will find assembled the most learned men in the world, who only discourse with one another in learned speech, so you would not understand a word of what was going on.' Messer Alano replied, 'Messere, at least I should behold the Pope, whom I have never yet seen, nor do know what his seeming may be.' The abbot, when he saw what Benedetto's desire was, said, 'I will allow you to go ; but do you know how to

manage a horse?’ and Messer Alano replied that he did. When the time had come the abbot set forth and took with him Messer Alano, and travelled to Rome, having received notice of what this consistory was to do, and that everyone should attend to hear the question which Messer Giovan Piero was to bring forward. Messer Alano begged the abbot to take him to the consistory; whereupon the abbot said, ‘Are you silly? Do you imagine that I can take you there, where will be assembled the Pope and cardinals and many men of mark?’ Messer Alano answered, ‘I might get in under your cope, seeing that I am very small and thin.’ The abbot warned Messer Alano that he might get well buffeted by the porters and mace-bearers, but Messer Alano said he would see to this. When the abbot arrived at the court there was a great crowd at the entrance, and on this account his servant slipped quickly under his mantle, and went in with the

rest. To the abbot was given a seat amongst the others according to his rank, and Messer Alano bestowed himself between his legs under his mantle, with his eye at a peep-hole, and on the alert to hear the question which was to be put.

After a short time had passed, behold Messer Giovan Piero entered the consistory and mounted the rostrum in the presence of the Pope and the cardinals and all the others, and put forward his thesis, which he supported by divers subtle and mischievous pleadings. Messer Alano knew at once who it was; and, when he perceived that no one got up to answer him, or had courage enough to meet him in argument, he thrust his head out of the opening in the abbot's mantle, and cried aloud, '*Giube*,'¹ whereupon the abbot raised his hand and dealt him a sound buffet, saying, 'Keep quiet, and bad luck to you! Would you bring shame upon me?' All those sit-

¹ An expression used in begging leave to speak.

ting near at once looked one at the other, saying, 'Whence came that voice?' and Messer Alano after a little thrust forth his head again, and cried, '*Sanctissime pater, audiat me;*' whereupon the abbot felt the blame must fall upon him, forasmuch as everyone looked at him, saying, 'What fellow have you there beneath your mantle?' The abbot replied that it was a half-witted convert of his, and then they all began to abuse him, crying out, 'Why do you bring madmen into the consistory?' And when they had brought in the mace-bearers to beat them, and to put them forth, Messer Alano, fearing lest he should be beaten, sprang out from under the abbot's mantle, and, passing through the bishops, went to the feet of the Pope himself. Then a great laugh arose from all, and the abbot came near to be driven out of the consistory because he had brought this fellow in; and when Messer Alano had come to the footstool of the Pope, he begged leave to speak his

mind upon the question in hand, which favour the Pope granted to him.

Messer Alano went up into the rostrum and gave a version of all Messer Giovan Piero had said, and then he went on from point to point, bringing the question to an issue by valid and natural arguments, whereupon all the assembly began to marvel at the excellent Latin he spoke, and at the fine reasoning he used in dealing with the matter ; so that everyone declared that this must be a messenger of God who had come among them. The Pope, when he heard such eloquence, gave thanks to God, and Messer Giovan Piero, being quite confounded by his opponent, became as one dazed, and cried, ‘ Certes, you must be the spirit of Messer Alano, or some evil demon.’ Then Messer Alano replied, ‘ I am that Alano who has at other times put you to silence ; you yourself are the evil demon who is striving to bring divisions into the Church.’ Then said Messer Giovan Piero, ‘ If I had thought

that you could possibly be living I would never have come hither.' The Pope desired to know who this man might be, and caused the abbot to be summoned, and then he demanded of him how the fellow came to be with him. The abbot said, 'Most holy father, I have always regarded him as one converted by me some time ago. For my part, I never suspected that he could even read, seeing that I never before knew so humble-minded a man. He has always worked hard in cutting wood, or sweeping the convent, or making the beds, or tending the sick, or managing the horses. I regarded him as a good-natured simpleton.'

The Pope, when he heard of the holy life of Messer Alano, and perceived what a worthy man he was, desired to make him a cardinal, knowing also what his past had been, and desiring to pay him the highest honour. He said, 'Had it not been for you, the Church of God would have fallen into grievous error,

wherefore I desire that you abide here at our court.' But Messer Alano answered, 'Most holy father, I am minded to live and die in a life of contemplation, and to have done with the world ; therefore I would fain go back with the abbot to the monastery. There I would continue the life I have begun, and wait ever on the service of God.' The abbot fell down at Messer Alano's feet, begging his pardon, forasmuch as he had not recognized him, and especially with regard to the box on the ear which he had given him. Messer Alano answered, 'No pardon is needful in such a case, seeing that it is the father's duty to correct the son.' Then the abbot and Messer Alano took leave of the Pope and cardinals, and went back to the monastery. And henceforth the abbot held him in the highest honour, and he passed there a holy and seemly life, compiling and completing divers excellent books concerning our faith. As long as he lived in this world his life was so fault-

less that at the end thereof he attained the reward and the glory of the life eternal."

NOVEL II.

The terrible doom which Bernabo Visconti, Duke of Milan, wrought upon Ambrogio, one of his courtiers, and upon a minor friar.



AS soon as Saturnina had come to the end of her novel, Frate Aurette began: "Of a truth your story was a marvellously fine one, and diverting and pious as well; indeed it pleased me as greatly as any other I ever listened to. And now I will tell one to you, which, what though it be not so good as yours, may still, I think, give you some pleasure.

In days past there lived in Milan a citizen named Ambrogio, who was the foremost personage at the court of his sovereign, Messer Bernabo Visconti, and the one enjoying the greatest favour and holding in his heart almost all the se-

crets of the lord aforesaid. Now this Ambrogio possessed a residence near to Milan which adjoined the property of a widow lady named Madonna Scotta, and to this house of his he desired to add a garden ; but he had not the land therefor. Wherefore he addressed the lady, begging her to sell him what land he required, for which he would pay its due value. But the lady replied that she was not minded to part with a single yard of her land, because it was her dowry, nor to minish or mar her estate to accommodate anyone. On this account he tried to persuade her again and again, and let others beg and entreat her persistently on his behalf, being willing to give for the land more than it was worth ; but the lady, who had begun by saying no, refused to alter her tone. Then Ambrogio, seeing how determined she was, and brooding over this affair, took of the lady's land as much as a bushel of corn would seed, and set up boundary marks, and made thereof a

garden. The lady, when she saw what was done, began to weep and lament, and having gone to a friar minor who was her father confessor, and through whose counsel she ruled her life, she told him all that had come to pass.

The friar was in the lady's interest, and hostile to Ambrogio, because in times past he had been jealous of him ; wherefore he said to her, in no righteous spirit, but rather hoping to work mischief, that she had better leave this affair in his hands. The lady replied that she would do whatsoever he might wish, neither less nor more, as is the way with women, who, as soon as they become widows, at once fall under the yoke of the religious orders. It happened one day the friar found out that Messer Bernabo, in a very ill humour, was making a progress through the land ; whereupon he and the widow threw themselves upon his horse's reins, and the crafty friar cried out, ' My lord duke, I know how you are kind and pitiful to widows and

helpless children, and on this account I beg you be pleased to listen to what this widowed woman has to say.' Messer Bernabo stopped his horse, and the lady said, weeping the while, 'My lord, see that justice be done to me, inasmuch as that courtier of yours has seized a portion of my land.' The duke, when he beheld the sorrow of the lady, turned to one of his squires and said, 'Remind me of this when we shall have returned home;' and when he dismounted from his horse he sent for this Ambrogio, and inquired of him if he had really taken any land from this lady. Ambrogio replied that he had. Then Messer Bernabo made all his people mount, and he himself got on his horse, and he took Ambrogio with him, saying, 'I am minded to see this land.'

When they came to the place in question the duke called Ambrogio and said, 'Now tell me where the bounds between your land and the lady's formerly stood.' Whereupon Ambrogio showed him the

place, and said, 'Signor, here it ran, and so much of land I took from her.' Then Messer Bernabo made them bring a spade and a mattock, and bade Ambrogio dig a trench where ran the boundary between the lady's land and his own. Ambrogio began to dig, and made a deep trench, Messer Bernabo standing above him the while; and, when he had dug the same deep enough, the duke bade his people seize him and plant him as if he were a tree in the trench, with his head downwards. He forbade any one to touch the wretched man, and took his way back, leaving this dead body planted to serve as a boundary post. This deed caused great commotion, and the friar was severely blamed thereanent, and the lady also, but no charge was laid against the friar. It came to pass in the same year that the general assembly of the friars minor was held in Milan, and all the conventual brothers came together there, and sent word to the duke, letting him know that the season of the assem-

bly was drawing nigh, and beseeching his kind offices, for the reason that, owing to the vast numbers who would be present, they would be in want of many things. They therefore begged his assistance, commending themselves to his favour by the love of God.

As soon as Messer Bernabo had listened to the message of these friars he answered and said, 'Go, in God's name, and I will inform you by a messenger of my own what I may be willing to do.' Whereupon the friars went away rejoicing. A short time afterwards Messer Bernabo called a gentleman of the court and said, 'Go to the house of the friars minor, and tell them from me that I will see that all their needs shall be provided for, especially in the matter of women; for of these I am certain they will want more than they now have.' The gentleman went straightway to the friary, and, having assembled the brothers, spake thus: 'The duke, Messer Bernabo, sends answer to you that he will

provide for all your wants, and especially in the matter of women, of whom he is assured that you will want more than those now about you, seeing that you are greatly given to women, and those few will not suffice for your needs.'

Then the friars looked at one another, and not one of them spake a word, save that one who had been the cause of Ambrogio's death, and he said, '*Qui de terra est, de terra loquitur.*' No other word was uttered, and they all dispersed without making further answer to the gentleman. He went back and told to the duke the message he had spoken. 'And what answer did they give?' the duke inquired. The gentleman replied that no one had answered aught save one friar, who had said, '*Qui de terra est, de terra loquitur.*' Messer Bernabo caused this friar to be brought before him straightway; and, without saying aught to him, bade them heat red-hot an iron, and thrust it in at one ear and out at the other, so that he might never hear more.

The friar lived only a few days and died in great misery, whereat everyone rejoiced, seeing that he had been the cause of Ambrogio's death, as I have already set forth."

When Aurette had finished his story the lovely Saturnina began a canzonet, and sang in this strain :

Love claims your service, lady; so be kind,
With courteous bearing, and with gentle mind.

If thou wouldst win renown with lovers true,
Give thou to pride, or to disdain, no place,
When I approach thy feet with reverence due,
But grant me every courtesy and grace.
So shall I show the world a joyous face,
As thou in me desert and worth shalt find.

Ah, ill becomes the humour pitiless,
Her who would offer Love her faith and
treasure !
Nurse in thy soul no drop of bitterness ;
Be thy reward of my desert the measure.
Thus wilt thou Love appease, and do his
pleasure,
And work his bidding with obedience blind.

How many let go by their early prime,
And then for all their wasted seasons grieve !
Who plague their lovers in that golden time,
Yet their own cruelty will not believe !
Seize thou thy chance, and tarry not till eve,
Lady, whose brows with Love's own flowers are
twined.

My song, go serve thou ladies beyond praise,
And use all others with deserved disdain.
But, if one lets you see by wanton ways,
That she of one more bout of love is fain,
Keep ever at her side, and tell her plain
That never was her heart for cruelty designed.

The song being ended the two lovers cut short their delight and their conversation for that evening, and with due obeisance thanked one another, praising the god of love who had brought them to the enjoyment of this secret pleasure, and each departing joyful at what fate had given.

The Seventh Day.



The Seventh Day.

NOVEL I.

The horrible cruelty used by Francesco Orsino towards Lisabetta his wife and other kinfolk, because of her becoming enamoured of a youth named Rinaldo; and the wretched end of Messer Orsino.



WHEN on the seventh day the two lovers returned to the parlour where they were wont to meet, Frate Aurette said :
“ As it is my turn to begin to-day, I will tell you of a cruel deed practised by a Roman upon his wife.

Not long ago there lived in Rome a gentleman named Messer Francesco Orsino da Monte Giordano, who had to wife a certain Donna Lisabetta, a lady fair and prudent and of very seemly

manners. She had lived with him some time, and had borne him two sons. But it chanced that a youth fell in love with this lady, and she with him; and, as they were not wise enough to keep hidden their love, Messer Francesco was told divers times of the same; but he refused to believe the report, seeing that the youth was neither comely, nor well-born, nor rich, and also because he had shown himself a friend and follower of the house. At last the steward saw it with his own eyes, and informed Messer Francesco, who said to him, 'Go and place yourself where you can espy him as he comes in, and then let me know, for I wish to see for myself; otherwise I shall never believe,' which thing the steward promised to do.

One day Messer Francesco made pretence to go to a country house of his, and took horse with several companions, but at nightfall he returned to Rome and lay hid till the steward came and fetched him. Then Messer Francesco

beheld the youth wantoning with his wife in the bedchamber, and saying, what time he kissed it, 'Whose little mouth is this?' and the lady replied, 'It is thine.' 'And these roguish eyes?' 'They are thine.' 'And these cheeks?' 'They are thine.' 'And this lovely throat?' 'It is thine.' 'And this fair bosom?' 'It is thine.' And thus, as he touched all the parts of her, she answered that they were his, except her hinder part, which she gave to her husband. And over this jest they raised a great laugh. When Messer Francesco saw and heard what they were doing and saying, he spake to himself, 'Praised be God that some part of her is allowed to me!' and, as soon as he had seen all and more than enough, he went away stealthily back to his country house, where he remained as long as it pleased him. When he returned home he caused to be fashioned for his wife a dress of coarse cloth, but with the hinder part thereof made of samite trimmed with ermine,

and likewise let prepare at his country house a very rich banquet, to which he invited the youth aforesaid and his two brothers, and divers of his kinsmen and associates. Having settled to give the feast on a certain Sunday morning, Messer Francesco made his wife put on the dress he had prepared, and took her through the streets of Rome. Then he directed her to repair to his country house, and join his guests at table, which thing she did in due course. When they were all assembled at the banquet, Messer Francesco placed his wife beside the youth, who was called Rinaldo, and then ranged in order all their kinsfolk and friends, setting before them a fair and sumptuous banquet.

When the guests beheld in what manner the lady was attired, they were astonished, and especially those who were akin to her and to Rinaldo, and said to themselves, 'Surely there is some great matter in hand,' while Rinaldo was mightily afeared. Then, when they had

finished their repast, Messer Francesco said, 'Now I will set before you some fruit ;' and, having risen, he first gave to every one of them at the table a stick, and then withdrew into a room where he had in readiness eight of his servants — the same as the number of the guests — also armed with sticks. He made these surround the table, and then said to those who sat thereat, 'Defend yourselves ;' and, having turned to his servants who stood there sticks in hand, he cried, 'Now bring out the fruit.' Whereupon the servants, as they had been commanded, overthrew the table and began to belabour with their sticks the guests who had been sitting there. With each party laying about a sharp fray arose, forasmuch as those at the table, finding themselves beaten with a will, were minded to give a proper return to their assailants. In short, the servants were so far superior in strength that they beat down all the guests, and laid them dead on the floor of the room. Then Messer

Francesco made them take the corpse of the young man Rinaldo and fasten it with arms outspread on a crucifix, and convey it to a room in his house, while all the other bodies were taken back to their several homes. This deed caused great complaint in Rome, on account of the death of so many worthy citizens, but no man dare open his mouth thereanent because the worker of the deed was a man of power in the city. Every night Messer Francesco took his wife and bound her to the corpse of Rinaldo, and made her remain all night in his embraces, and rise therefrom at daybreak. Every day he gave her naught else but two slices of bread and a beaker of water, so that her life might be all the more wretched. And in this wise she lived several days, sending constantly to beg mercy of Messer Francesco, but he was deaf to her prayers.

Then she, perceiving that she was to die, and that there was no remedy, prayed that she might see her children before

her death ; whereupon they brought her two sons to her. She took them in her arms, and weeping plentifully spake to them these words : ‘ Dearest sons of mine, I leave you with God’s blessing and my own. You are indeed the sons of Messer Francesco, born in lawful wedlock, but the enmity of one of my servants has brought me to this pass. And albeit this excuse of mine be not a valid one, nevertheless I leave to God and to you, as my sons, the duty of avenging the fate of your wretched and unfortunate mother.’ And she could not kiss them enough, for the anxiety that possessed her. Then, after blessing them, she gave them up to their nurse with these words : ‘ Take these children whom I leave you, and, by God’s faith and by your own soul, see that, when they shall be grown up, you recall my death to their memory, and especially to this the younger one,’ and this little boy in sooth wept grievously and would not let himself be taken from her neck. When she

had delivered them over, and assured them that they were lawfully born and not bastards, she commended her soul to God, and spake no more in this life, but died after the lapse of a few days.

They took her body and her lover's and bore them away, and the cruel deed was praised by some and blamed by others; and it came to pass that the nurse, when the time was ripe, told the children the story of their mother's death; and the consequence of this revelation was that Messer Francesco lost his wits, and for a long time went wandering distraught about the world, being in the most bitter enmity with his sons, and especially with the younger. Messer Francesco abode in the woods, sleeping there as if he had been a savage, working all the crazy antics which madmen are wont to practise. And thus they say the lady's fate was avenged."

NOVEL II.

Messer Galeotto Malatesta di Arimino causes Gostanza his niece to be slain barbarously, as well as Ormanno, a German soldier who was wont privily to visit her.



AS soon as Aurette had finished his story Saturnina said, "The deed you have described was certes a very cruel one, and I will now tell you of another which was wrought in Romagna no long time ago." And she began as follows :

"There lived in Romagna, in the town of Arimino, a very worthy gentleman and baron, who was named Messer Galeotto Malatesta, who was the most excellent cavalier Romagna had produced for a very long time, and the wisest and the most prudent to boot, always passing his days in splendid and noble fashion, and maintaining the dignity of his state. This Messer Galeotto had a certain niece, a lady named Madonna Gostanza, who

was a widow and the daughter of Messer Malatesta Unghero de' Malatesti, himself a valorous and skilful knight. This Madonna Gostanza kept in Arimino a very sumptuous court of ladies and damsels and squires, leading the life of a noble lady, as in sooth she was. Out of devotion to Messer Galeotto the highest honour was paid to her, and she held the estates which her father and her husband had left. Indeed, there was not in all Romagna, nor in Tuscany, nor in the March, another like her, possessed of such splendid jewels, or so rich a lady as she was. In brief, she enjoyed all the delights that one in her case could rightly use, and many gifts of nature as well, forasmuch as she was young, fair, well-mannered, rich, and highly born. She was to all seeming prudent in her carriage, enjoying the esteem of all those who knew her, and, by marrying her well, her uncle hoped to make a rich and noble alliance.

Messer Galeotto had in his pay a cer-

tain soldier called Ormanno, who was the leader of fifty lances, a native of the upper parts of Germany, and sprung from a town called Cham. He had had several brothers and brothers' sons, all knights and gentlemen of ancient lineage, and for this reason he, too, sold his services. He was courteous and well-mannered and strong in his person, wherefore Messer Galeotto held him in high esteem. It happened that Ormanno passed divers times by the palace of Madonna Gostanza while she was at the window, and, their eyes having met, Ormanno became hotly enamoured of her, and he set to work to show himself in such wise that the lady's eyes fell upon him favourably, so that she began to love him. The love between them grew so great that they began to exchange rich gifts, those of the lady to her lover being especially sumptuous. They often had speech together, and a plan was laid that Ormanno should gain the reward which love demands above

all others. But they knew not how to keep hidden the flame of their ardent passion, nor to use prudent carriage in what they did, seeing that love is blind, and the foes thereof are subtle. And because Ormanno was known to frequent the lady's palace at unseemly hours, divers reports of his conduct came to Messer Galeotto, but he would not believe them.

At a certain time it came to pass that the College of Cardinals at Rome under divine direction elected Urban VI. as pope, Pope Gregory XI. being dead. The College of Cardinals, Italian and Ultramontane as well, made known this fact to all the sovereigns and communes of Christendom, how they had elected Pope Urban VI.; wherefore Messer Galeotto, as a son and servant of the Holy Church, was minded to go and visit the new pontiff; but, before he set forth, he sent for Ormanno and thus addressed him: 'It is true I hear that you frequent the house of my niece Gostanza,

but this I do not believe. However, be that as it may, I beg you so to bear yourself that no such rumours may come to my ears in the future.' Ormanno replied, 'My lord, you will find there is no truth in this. He who told you thereof is one evilly disposed towards me, one who seeks to bring me into ill-favour. For my part, I am ready to make good my words upon his own person,' and he went on to excuse himself over this report. Messer Galeotto answered him, 'Ormanno, you are prudent and have understood my words. I will say no more, but will leave in your charge Arimino and all I possess. You shall be the commander of my men-at-arms until such time as I return from Rome; wherefore see that you do naught which shall deserve my blame when I come back.' Ormanno replied that he would observe his charge, and Messer Galeotto departed for Rome, leaving everything under Ormanno's guard, as it has been said. But Ormanno showed no discre-

tion in the pursuit of his passion, and went constantly to the lady's house, holding his lord in no respect or reverence, but following rather the promptings of his unbridled lust, of which he was the slave; and the lady gave him a certain silver girdle.

Now when Messer Galeotto came back, word was brought to him how Ormanno had never ceased to frequent the house of Madonna Gostanza, and how this thing was well known to a great number of the ladies and gentlemen of Arimino. Messer Galeotto considered well this report, and secretly set a watch to see whether it might be true; and when Ormanno, who was ignorant of the watch kept upon him, was seen to enter the lady's house by night, the news was forthwith conveyed to Messer Galeotto, who at once caused the house to be surrounded by certain soldiers whom he kept on guard. He charged them by their lives not to allow Ormanno to quit the house; and this com-

mand they duly obeyed. Then he let summon divers of the citizens, and took counsel with them as to the affair, and one advised this course, and the other that. When it drew near to daybreak, and Ormanno was minded to quit the lady's house, he looked and beheld the soldiers who were posted round the same, and, turning to the lady, told her what had happened. Thereupon she arose, and, having gone to the window, spake thus: 'What is the meaning of this, and why are these guards set round my house? Are you not ashamed thus to post your soldiers about my doors?' And in sooth these words of hers were the cause of her death; for, had she not shown herself at the window, she would not then have perished, for Messer Galeotto had already privily determined to save Madonna Gostanza's honour by laying the fault on one of her waiting-women. But when it was told to him how she had appeared at the window, and had spoken these words, he conferred with a certain

well-advised and valiant gentleman, and, this done, he called an officer of his foot-soldiers and said to him, 'Go to the house of my niece, where you will find her and Ormanno, and straightway hew them in pieces for me.' The officer, who was called Santolino da Faenza, replied, 'My lord, I will readily do your bidding with regard to him, but not with regard to her; and in sooth you must excuse me this task, forasmuch as I will never stain my hand with the blood of the Malatestas.' Then said Messer Galeotto, 'Go, then, and kill him.' Whereupon the officer departed straightway on his task.

Messer Galeotto then called another officer and said to him, 'Go and hew in pieces my niece Gostanza,' and the officer answered that the deed should be done forthwith, and went to the palace of Madonna Gostanza. When Santolino came to the door of the chamber he knocked, and Madonna Gostanza asked what was his errand. Then said he,

‘Open to me, madonna, for I have a message to deliver on the part of my master.’ Then, when the lady had opened the door, Santolino asked her where was Ormanno, but she answered, ‘What Ormanno?’ Santolino said, ‘To be brief, madonna, my master knows that he is here, and has sent me to him with a message; wherefore let us despatch this business, lest a worse thing ensue.’ The lady said, ‘You know well that men are not wont to come here.’ But Santolino told her that, if she did not at once point out where Ormanno was, it would fare ill with her. The lady, hearing him speak in this strain, told him where Ormanno was; whereupon Santolino went and called out, ‘Ormanno, I have a message for you on the part of our master,’ and Ormanno replied, ‘Say what you will;’ but Santolino went on, ‘Let us go into some private place, for I do not wish to be overheard,’ and when they had gone into a little room Santolino said, ‘Ormanno,

you must die ; this is your irrevocable doom.' Ormanno fell down in a swoon, but, having come to himself, he said, 'Is there for me no escape from death ?' and Santolino replied that there was none, inasmuch as this matter had been settled for good and all. Then Ormanno fell on his knees at Santolino's feet, and, lifting his hands to heaven, he bowed to the ground and licked the dust. Then he put his hands before his eyes that he might not look upon death, and bent his head, and Santolino drew his sword, and in a moment Ormanno lay dead at his feet.

Now when that other officer, who had been sent to deal out a similar fate to the lady, had come into her chamber, he said, 'Madonna, I have a message for you on the part of my master,' and she, all dazed, bade him say what he would ; whereupon he replied, 'Send away all these maids of yours.' When the lady had dismissed them, he went to the door, and, having bolted it, he laid his hand

upon his sword and cried, 'Madonna, you must die.' The lady set up a terrible crying, and would fain have fled, but he said, 'Madonna, do not fly; that will profit you naught; for our master has determined that you must die, and none but God himself can save you.' The lady cried out, 'But is Messer Galeotto fain to murder his own flesh and blood?' The officer bade her make haste, and the lady asked him how he dared think of shedding the blood of Messer Malatesta Unghero her father; but he replied that he must needs do the deed which he had been commanded to do, and that she ought to pardon him, seeing that he put his hand unwillingly to the same. She cried, 'But is there no remedy?' and he answered that there was none. Then she knelt before the altarpiece of Our Lady and spake thus: 'If my brave and high-souled father were now alive I should not die in this base and shameful fashion; wherefore I commend to thy keeping, O sweet-

est Virgin Mary, this life and soul of mine, and the life and soul likewise of that worthy gentleman who, for my sake, is fated to undergo torture and death like mine. And I further beseech thee, Mother of mercy, to make me brave and constant to meet death, so that, having suffered the same patiently, my soul like that of a martyr may enter into the glory of your most sacred Son, Jesus Christ. For I certes have found in this world little to content me with my lot.'

Then she turned towards the officer, who was holding his sword aloft, and said, 'Since my vanity has brought me into this case, I beg you not to hurry overmuch, but show me a little mercy, so that I may pray to the Virgin Mary ten times;' and he, pitying her, consented, saying, 'Say your prayers, but be brief.' Then, as she did reverence to the Virgin Mary with many tears, she glanced in terror at the handle of the sword. Now when she had been praying a little time, he inquired whether

est Virgin Mary, this life and soul of mine, and the life and soul likewise of that worthy gentleman who, for my sake, is fated to undergo torture and death like mine. And I further beseech thee, Mother of Mercy, to make me brave and constant to meet death, so that, having suffered the same patiently, my soul like that of a martyr may enter into the glory of your most sacred Son, Jesus Christ. For I have no more to wish in this world little to venture upon my lot.'

Gostanza Praying Before Her Execution

Then she turned towards the officer, who was standing aloft, and said, 'Since my father has brought me into this case, I beg you not to hurry overmuch, but show me a little mercy, so that I may pray to the Virgin Mary ten times;' and he, pitying her, consented, saying, 'Say your prayers, but be brief.' Then, as she did reverence to the Virgin Mary with many tears, she glanced in terror at the handle of the sword. Now when she had been praying a little time, he inquired whether

The Seventh Day

SECOND NOVEL.



she had finished her devotions, and she answered no. Then the officer cried out, 'No! In sooth, I could have said twenty prayers in this time.' The lady went on, 'Ah, wretched Gostanza! to what strait art thou come? Oh, blind Love, why has thou deceived me, and why am I sent hence with my name thus defiled? Would that I had died ere I was born!' The officer deemed that she delayed overmuch; therefore he bade her recite the Ave Maria, which she did thrice in very devout fashion. Then he lifted up his sword and smote her, and thus she died, and fell a corpse at his feet. Messer Galeotto made his servants put the two wretched bodies into one sack, and cast the same into the sea. Then he made a proclamation that all those who had any claims upon this Ormanno should come to him for satisfaction, and he paid all those to whom payment was due, and thus he dissolved the troop of Ormanno, and dismissed it. For this deed of his Messer Galeotto

was commended by some and blamed by others."

As soon as the story was finished Aurette began a canzonet, dealing somewhat with the subject of the novel, after the following fashion :

Let none serve Love unguardedly, unless
He fain would end his days in wretchedness.

We scan the heroes great of old renown,
Sir Tristan, good Achilles, stout and strong,
Who for love's sake the gift of life laid down ;
Love's pleasures mixed their heartfelt pains
among,
And other names illustrious in a throng,
Who sank their fame in guilty love's excess.

And weakest he who knows Love's craft the best,
For all at last will fall into his snare.
Reft of his wings was Virgil love-possessed,
And other famous singers, skilled and rare,
Found scant protection in their thought and
care,
And fell the victims of his artfulness.

Let all who in love's service take their part,
Be warned by Gostanza's woeful fate.
Let not thy darling leman snare thy heart,

By wanton geste or glance importunate.
 Thus hope is wrecked, and counsel comes too
 late,
 For those who fail in care and watchfulness.

To lovers true, my song, now take thy wing,
 And bid them tread in sober honest ways,
 And charge them when they feel the rapturous
 sting
 Of love, and fain would wander in his maze,
 That they be prudent, and be sure always
 Keep rein in hand, and headlong speed repress.¹

When the song was finished the two
 lovers brought for that day their gentle
 discourse to a close ; and, having taken
 each other by the hand and greeted with
 merry words and with courteous reve-
 rence, they saluted and said farewell, each
 one departing gladsome and content.

¹ This canzonet is a good example of Dante's influence upon the writer.

*"e vidi 'l grande Achille,
 Che per amore al fine combatteo.
 Vidi Paris, Tristano. E più di mille
 Ombre mostrommi, e nominolle a dito,
 Ch' Amor di nostra vita dipartille."
 Inferno, v.*

The Eighth Day.



The Eighth Day.

NOVEL I.

How the parties of the Guelfs and Ghibellines arose, and how the accursed seed of strife was first sown and began to spring in Italy.

WHEN on the eighth day the lovers sought their accustomed meeting-place, Saturnina began and said: "As it is my turn to-day, I am minded that we enter into consideration of a moral and lofty theme; therefore I will relate to you how the Guelf and Ghibelline parties first arose, and how this accursed seed of discord came into our land and grew up." And thus she began:

"In Germany at one time there lived two gentlemen who held one another in

the dearest friendship. They were nobly born, and possessed of great wealth, and dwelt within a mile's distance of each other, the one being named Guelf, and the other Ghibelline. On a certain day it came to pass that, as they were coming back from the chase, a quarrel arose between them on account of a certain bitch; and, as they had up to this time been friends and close companions, so they now became bitter foes, and used every occasion they could find to work ill one to another. So great did the discord between them wax that they both of them sent out invitations to their several friends, and gathered together large companies of the same, in order that they might wage war together. So widely did this scandal spread, that in the course of time it came about that all the nobles and barons of Germany were divided into opposing factions on this account; for the reason that some of them would hold to the side of the Guelfs and others to that of the Ghibellines; wherefore it

happened every year that many men on the one side or the other lost their lives.

Now at a certain time the Ghibelline chief found himself fiercely attacked by the Guelf, and, it seeming to him that his adversary was far more potent than himself, he appealed to the Emperor Frederic I., who was then ruling, for his protection. On account of this, Guelf, seeing that Ghibelline had placed himself under the Emperor Frederic's protection, straightway sent letters to the Pope Honorius II., who was at that time at enmity with the emperor, entreating his good offices against his foe, and letting him know how the matter stood. Thus the pope, when he understood how the emperor had taken up the cause of Ghibelline, at once ranged himself on the side of Guelf. And from this cause it happens that the holy see is Guelf, and the empire Ghibelline, and thus the origin of the Guelf and Ghibelline factions is to be found in this accursed bitch.

It was in the year of Christ mcccv that the seed of dissension aforementioned was first sown in Italy in this wise. At this time it chanced that the Podestà of Florence was a certain Messer Guido Orlandi (and in sooth the office of Podestà of Florence is a great and noble one). Amongst the members of the house of the Buondelmonti there was a gentleman who was called by name Messer Buondelmonte, and he was of a most seemly presence, wealthy, and of great valour. Now this said Messer Buondelmonte had sworn troth with a maiden of the family of the Amidei to make her his wife, and had joined hands with her, and had confirmed his promises with all those solemnities which rightly belong to such occasions. One day when Messer Buondelmonte was passing by the house of the Donati, a certain lady, who was called by name Madonna Lapacia, saw him and called out to him, and said, ‘Messere Buondelmonte, I am indeed greatly aston-

ished that you should so far disgrace yourself by choosing for your wife one who is not fit to take off your shoes. Now I have been keeping a daughter of mine for you, and I am fain that you should come and see her.' Thereupon she called for her daughter, whose name was Ciulla, a maiden as graceful and fair as any one in Florence, and let Messer Buondelmonte look upon her, and said, 'This is she whom I have been keeping for you.' Whereupon Messer Buondelmonte, after he had gazed upon the maiden's beauty, became enamoured of her, and said, 'Madonna, I am quite prepared to do whatsoever you may desire ;' and, before he went his way from thence, he had taken the maiden as his wife, and had given her the ring in token of the deed. Now when it became known to the Amidei that Messer Buondelmonte had taken to wife another woman, and would have naught to do with the maiden of their house, they all gathered together and took counsel with all their other

kinsfolk, and with their friends as well, to devise some plan whereby they might wreak their vengeance upon Messer Buondelmonte for the ill deed that he had done.

To this council came Lambertuccio Amidei and Schiatta Ruberti and Mosca Lamberti, and divers others besides. The advice of one was that they should give him a sound beating, of another that someone should wound him in the face, and this man counselled one thing, and that man another. At last Mosca Lamberti stood up and said, 'A thing well done is done for good;' meaning by this to let them understand that a dead man would never again go to the wars. On this account it was determined that Messer Buondelmonte should be slain, and this counsel they put into execution. When Messer Buondelmonte was returning on Easter morning from breakfasting at the house of the Bardi, which lay on the other side of the Arno, he was mounted upon a white horse with-

out spot, and wore himself a white cloak. When he came to the foot of the Ponte Vecchio, where there stood the statue of Mars which the Florentines were wont to worship what time they were pagans, and where at this time is the fish-market, a troop of assailants sprang upon him from behind, and seized him and dragged him from his horse to the ground, and there they put an end to his life.¹

The whole of Florence at once was filled with uproar on account of Messer Buondelmonte's death, and by reason of this homicide there arose a division amongst all the noble families and houses of Florence. Those who took the side of the Buondelmonti made themselves

¹ "O Buondelmonte, quanto mal fuggisti
Le nozze sue per gli altrui conforti!
Molti sarebber lieti che son tristi,
Se Dio t'avesse concesso ad Ema
La prima volta ch' a città venisti.
Ma conveniasi a quella pietra scema
Che guarda 'l ponte, che Fiorenza fesse
Vittima nella sua pace postrema."

DANTE, *Paradiso*, xvi.

the heads of the Guelf party in the city, and those who favoured the cause of the Amidei became the leaders of the Ghibelines. The names of those who held to the Guelfs were as follows: the Buondelmonti, the Nerli, the Jacopi, the Dati, the Rossi, the Bardi, the Frescobaldi, the Mozzi, the Pulci, the Gherardini, the Foraboschi, the Bagnesi, the Guidalotti, the Sacchetti, the Manieri, the Da Quona, the Luccardesi, the Chiaramontieri, the Cavalcanti, the Compiombesi, the Giondonati, the Scali, the Gianfigliuzzi, the Importuni, the Bosticchi, the Tornabuoni, the Vecchietti, the Tosinighi, the Arigucci, the Agli, the Adimari, the Bisdomini, the Tedaldi, the Cerchi, the Donati, the Arighi, and those of the Della Bella family. All these noble families, together with certain of the townsfolk, joined themselves to the Guelf party on account of the death of Messer Buondelmonte. And those who became of the Ghibelline faction were as follows: the Uberti, the Amidei (and the chief of

them were the Counts of Gangalandi), Ubriachi, Manelli, Fifanti, Infangati, Malespini, and those of the house of Volognana ; the Scolari, the Guidi, the Galli, the Capiardi, the Lamberti, the Soldanieri, the Cipriani, the Toschi, the Amieri, the Palermini, the Migliorelli, the Pigli — what though some of the last-named subsequently became Guelfs — the Barucci, the Catani, and the Catani of Castiglione, the Agolanti, the Brunelleschi — who also became Guelfs afterwards — the Caponsacchi, the Elisei, the Abati, the Tedaldini, the Giuochi, and the Galigai. All these became Ghibellines on account of the death of Messer Buondelmonte, and from this one quarrel arose the factions which parted and divided all the nobles and the people of Italy, and sowed thus widely this evil seed. And all the Guelfs took the part of the Holy See, while the Ghibellines held to the Emperor. So now you have heard how in Germany the strife between the Guelfs and Ghibellines began on ac-

count of a bitch, and later on in Italy on account of a woman, as I have set forth in the foregoing story."

NOVEL II.

How the exiled Ghibellines of Florence returned thither, and drove out the Guelfs, and with what subtlety they cozened the people of Florence.



WHEN Frate Aurretto perceived that Saturnina's novel had come to an end, he said, "Forasmuch as you have begun to deal with themes of this character, I will tell you in what manner the Ghibellines, having been banished Florence, returned to the city and chased out the Guelfs, and how they put a crafty cheat upon the Florentines. For some long time after the Ghibellines had been driven away from Florence they abode in Siena and harried the Florentine territory, having been reinforced by eight hundred Germans of the army of King Manfred,

all stout men-at-arms. It came to pass that Messer Farinata degli Uberti and Messer Gherardo Lamberti, the chiefs of the exiled Ghibellines, took counsel together how they might dupe the commune of Florence, and, being cautious men and well versed in stratagem, they called for two lusty friars of the order of St. Francis, and thus addressed them: ‘We desire that you go to Florence to the chiefs of the government, and tell them, on behalf of seven of the chief citizens of Siena, that if they are willing to send ten thousand florins, Siena will be given over to them.’ The friars replied that they were willing to go, but first they desired to see the seven citizens aforesaid. This done, they would set forth. Messer Farinata and Messer Gherardo agreed to this, and they likewise made known to the seven Sienese citizens what it was they were minded to do; and, having come to a secret agreement with them, they again sought the friars, and told them how these seven

citizens aforesaid were ill-content with the government of Messer Provenzano Salvani, who then ruled Siena, and would liefer live under the sway of Florence. Then the two friars took the letters of introduction, under the seals of the citizens aforesaid, and went to Florence; where, having enlisted the favour of the priors, they thus began to speak: 'Signors, we are come hither for the sake of the honour and glory and increase of this commonwealth, and we have certain private matters to reveal.'

On account of the mission of the friars the signory chose two citizens to hear their story and confer with them, Messer Giovanni Calcani and the deputy of the Porta San Piero.¹ These, after conferring with the friars, understood that certain citizens had authorized these men to give up Siena to Florence; whereupon the friars went on to suggest that

¹ Orig., "*lo Spedito di porta San Piero.*" Villani (viii. 2) writes of him as "*huomo di grande opera et ardire, et era il detto Spedito de' principali guidatori del popolo.*"

the commune of Florence should equip a large body of men and make pretence of relieving Montalcino, and come to a halt at the river Arbia, about four miles from Siena, and remain there until these citizens should give into their hands the gate leading to Arezzo, called the Porta Santa Vieni; but first of all the commune must deposit with them ten thousand florins. The friars showed them the sealed letters and the authority which they bore; wherewith the two citizens aforesaid were fully satisfied, and forthwith gave in deposit the ten thousand florins. They next let assemble the council, which contained divers noble citizens who were skilled captains in war, and they put before the same a petition that, for the welfare and honour of the state, they would be pleased to throw supplies into Montalcino. Whereupon the Count Guido Guerra rose and affirmed that it was in no way expedient to do this, forasmuch as he himself had witnessed the ill-starred attempt made ear-

lier in the year by the Florentines against Santa Petronella ; then they must consider the fresh troop of Germans which King Manfred had sent to aid the Ghibellines, and he concluded by saying that the people of Orvieto could relieve Montalcino with little cost. So that, weighing each argument, he must oppose the despatch of the expedition. Next rose Messer Teghiaio Aldobrandi, who also demurred to the proposition, adducing many reasons for his opinion ; but to him the deputy of the Porta San Piero, a man full of conceit, made answer and said, that if Messer Teghiaio were afeared he had better look in his breeches. Messer Teghiaio replied, ‘You will never dare to follow me into the battle.’ When he sat down Messer Cece Gherardini rose and began to give counsel similar to Count Guido’s ; whereupon the signory bade him hold his peace under a penalty of a hundred lire—a fine which he at once offered to pay as the price of free speech. Then they charged him to

keep silent or pay two hundred, and again he was ready to pay the money. They raised the fine to three hundred, and got the same answer; whereupon they commanded him to cease speaking under pain of losing his head, and this reduced him to silence. In such fashion it was settled by the people of Florence that the enterprise should be undertaken forthwith.

Thereupon they called out the people of Lucca, who lived under their free commune, of Bologna, Pistoia, Prato, San Miniato, Colle, and San Gimignano; and, besides these, the greater part of the populace and of the noble families of Florence, horse and foot, went forth to battle, taking with them with great ceremony the Carroccio, and the bell which they called Martinella, mounted upon a chariot and on a wooden tower. So they marched until they came into the territories of Siena by the river Arbia, at a place known as Monte Aperti. There they found the forces of Orvieto

and Perugia who had come to support those of Florence, and there were three thousand knights as well as three thousand men-at-arms and three thousand foot-soldiers in the field. Now it happened that the aforesaid chiefs of the conspiracy, Messer Farinata and Messer Gherardo, had in the meantime despatched to Florence certain other friars, who entered into relations with some of the Ghibellines of the city to help forward the affair, and these two friars betook themselves to the camp with the other Florentines on the hill of Monte Aperti, waiting until the traitors should deliver over the gate which had been promised. Then a Ghibelline of Florence, named Razante, having heard that a Ghibelline plot was being hatched in Siena, betook himself thither, with the assent of the other Ghibellines who were in the camp, to tell the exiled Florentines in Siena in what fashion their plot was being carried out. When he had come there he spake in this wise to Mes-

ser Farinata and Messer Gherardo, who answered saying, 'If you let this story of yours be known in Siena it will be the ruin of us; forasmuch as the Sienese, if they should hear thereof, would be afeared, and would not fight; and it will be better for us to fight now that we have these eight hundred Germans, and to stake all on this venture rather than to go on ranging the world as beggars. For this reason we beg you to let circulate a story exactly opposite to this one of yours, which thing you will know how to do.' Razante, having heard their speech, said, 'Leave the affair in my hands.'

Razante put upon his head a wreath of olive, and, having gone into the parliament where all the Sienese were met together, said, 'I come from the Florentine camp, on behalf of all the Ghibelines who are there, to tell you that the army is ill led and full of discord; wherefore, smite boldly, and you will gain the day.' Straightway a great commotion

arose in the city, and all men took up arms, and they sent to the front the eight hundred Germans, the people and the cavaliers following crying out, 'To death, to death!' And when the Florentine host perceived this army moving so suddenly against them with the intention of giving battle, they said, 'We are betrayed,' and attempted to form battle array; but divers Ghibellines who were in the camp fled and joined the Sienese. And when the Germans had come where the great mass of the Florentine forces were, Messer Bocca degli Uberti fell upon Messer Jacopo dei Pazzi, who bore in his hand the standard, and cut off his hand in which he held the same¹—a traitor's act, indeed, seeing that Bocca belonged to Pazzi's company. As soon as the Florentines beheld the fall of the standard, and knew that they were betrayed, they suddenly broke and fled. Then the Germans fell upon them and did as they would with them, especially

¹ Dante, *Inferno*, xxxii.

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The Victory of Boona Degg
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The Eighth Day
SECOND NOVEL

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The Victory of Bocca Degli Uberti

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¹ *Il libro, capitulo, etc.*



the foot-soldiers who took refuge in the village of Monte Aperti. Amongst them were many men of Lucca and Orvieto, who were all killed ; and, besides this, the Florentines lost the Carroccio and the bell called Martinella. More than two thousand five hundred were slain, and more than fifteen hundred taken prisoners. And when the defeated Guelfs returned to Florence from Monte Aperti, there arose in the city the most bitter weeping and lamentation over the disaster ; because, of wellnigh every noble family, some were left behind dead. And as soon as the Guelfs realized that the exiled were beginning to return to Florence, they departed with their families, and went to take up their abode in Lucca.

This thing happened in the year MCCLX, on the fourth day of September, and then the exiled Ghibellines at Siena, with the Conte Giordano, who was at the head of the eight hundred Germans, returned to Florence without further

mishap, laden with spoil which they had taken at Monte Aperti. Thus Florence surrendered itself to the Ghibelline faction, the Conte Guido Novello dei Conti Guidi being made podestà ; and he caused to be made the gate called the Porta Ghibellina, which looks towards Casentino, so that he might be able to bring in and let depart his own people as he should desire. And from that time the street between the gate and the place where justice is dispensed has been called the Via Ghibellina. The Guelfs of Florence were severely censured in that they went forth to Monte Aperti without knowing wherefore ; and when the news reached the Roman court how the Florentines had been overthrown at Monte Aperti, the pope and many of the cardinals were mightily displeased, because the Church at Rome was humbled thereby, and King Manfred greatly strengthened. But Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, being a Ghibelline, rejoiced much thereat ; wherefore Cardinal Bianco,

who was a skilled astrologer, spake a prophecy in these words: 'The conquered shall conquer in victorious fashion, and shall never more be overcome.' And in like manner as the Guelfs had quitted Florence, they also quitted Pistoia and Prato and San Miniato and San Gimignano, and dwelt in Lucca, in that quarter which adjoins San Friano, and the loggia which stands opposite to San Friano was built by the exiled Guelfs of Florence.

The whole of the Tuscan territory being under the sway of the Ghibellines, they held an assembly at Empoli, and proposed that Florence should be laid waste and become a group of townships; and this would have been carried had it not been for Farinata, who refused to agree thereto.¹ And the Ghibellines made Count Guido their captain, and went to take the field against the forces of Siena. They took Santa Croce, Castelfranco and Santa Maria a Monte, and

¹ Dante, *Inferno*, x.

then went against Fucecchio, but this place they could not capture because within it was the flower of the Guelf party. Then the exiled Guelfs sent an embassy to Germany in order to stir up to rebellion the young Conradin, and to induce him to join them ; but this thing his mother forbade, as he was yet over young. The following summer Count Guido with all the sections of the Ghibelline party took the field against the forces of Lucca, having been stirred up thereto by the Pisans ; whereupon the people of Lucca made alliance with the Ghibellines and drove the Guelfs out of their city, some of them going to Bologna and Modena, and some to France and England, in order to make gain by traffic. And hence arose the great wealth which came to Florence. Now you have heard how the Guelfs let themselves be cozened and banished from Florence, without knowing who had wrought them this ill turn." And, having finished her story, the amorous Sat-

urnina sang a very sweet song in the following words :

Once more my ardent longings burn amain,
And twofold torments in my bosom rise,
And dire the flame, and pitiless the pain
Wrought by my lady's sweet and gentle eyes ;
And as I figure her fair face more clearly,
The more my soul of love of her is fain.
I see my fate, and yet I cherish dearly
My present bliss, what though set round with bane.

So may I find one sweet in all my woe
To lull my troubles in a lasting peace,
To serve her pleasure dear delights me so,
That coming days will bring me joy and ease ;
Wherefore, though burning love torments me sore,
I murmur not, so I have peace once more.

After the fair Saturnina had sung her canzonet in exceeding gracious wise, the two lovers brought their amorous discourse to an end for that day. They took one another by the hand, and with divers merry speeches, and with much courtesy, they gave greeting and said farewell, and each departed.



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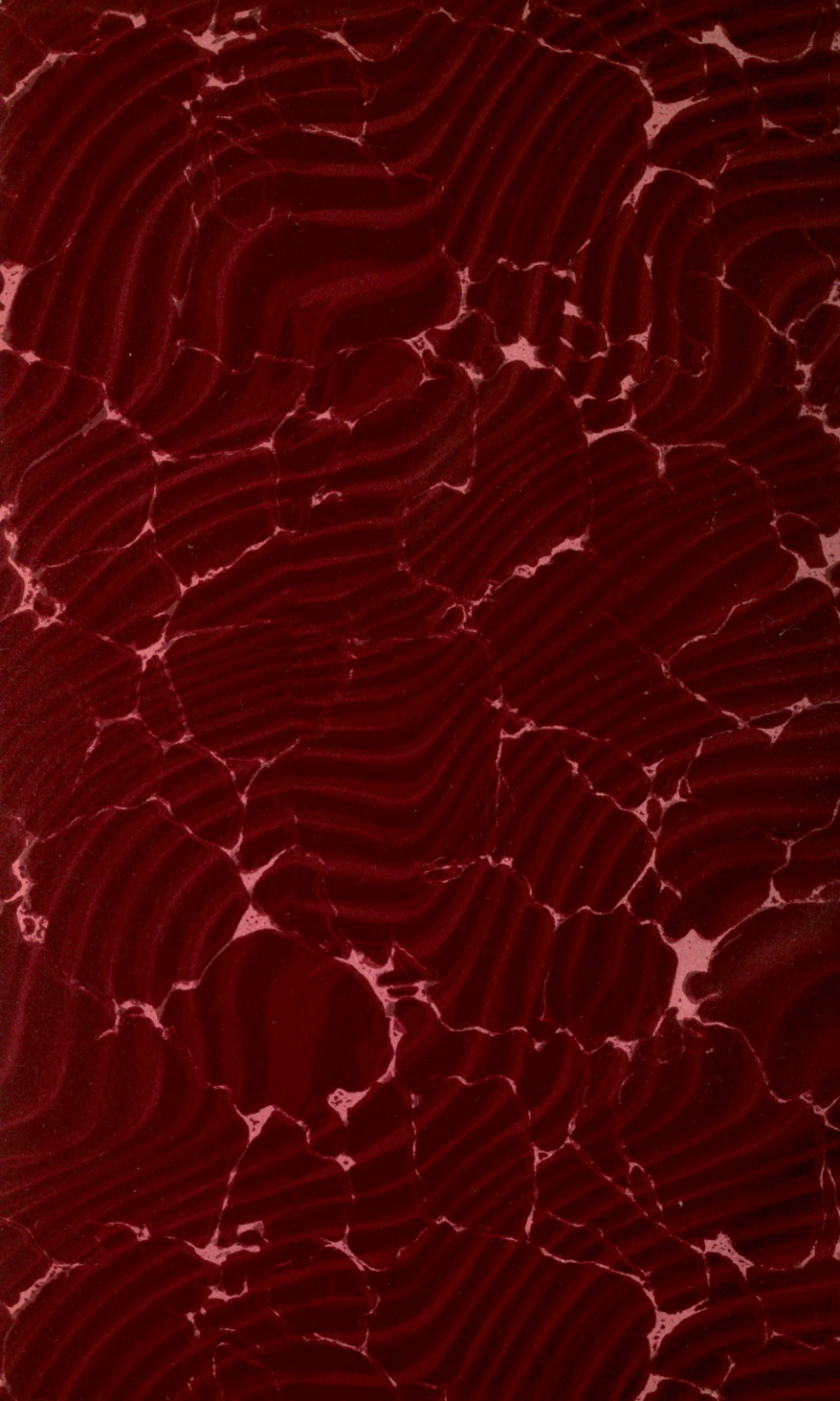
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